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A PARAPHRASE AND COMMENT UPON THE Epiſtles and Goſpels,

Appointed to be Uſed in the

Church of *ENGLAND*

ON ALL

SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS Throughout the Year.

Deſigned to excite Devotion, and to promote the Knowledge and Practice of Sincere Piety and Virtue.

VOL. III.

Beginning with the Firſt Sunday after Eaſter, and Ending with the Laſt Sunday after Trinity.

By GEORGE STANHOPE, D. D.
Late Dean of *Canterbury*.

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M DCC LXXV.



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A PARA-

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PARAPHRASE and COMMENT

Upon all the

Epiſtles and Goſpels,

Uſed throughout the Year.

The Firſt Sunday after EASTER.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty Father, who haſt given thine only Son to die for our Sins, and to * riſe again for our Juſtification: Grant us ſo to put away † the Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs, that we may always ſerve thee in Pureneſs of Living and Truth, through the Merits of the ſame thy Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

* *Rom.* iv. 25.

† 1 *Cor.* v. 7, 8.

The EPISTLE.

1 *St.* John v. 4.

4. *WHatſoever is born of God overcometh the World: and this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.*

PARAPHRASE.

4. Every true Child of God gets above the Affections and Temptations of this World, in the Strength of that Faith, which gives him full Aſſurance of, and ſets his Heart upon, another and better World.

5. *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?*

5. Of which Aſſurance the Belief that Jeſus is the Son of God, and ſo the Author of Eternal Salvation, is the Ground.

6. For this Belief we have the ſtrongeſt evidence; even the Innocence of his Life, the Merits of his Death, the Teſtimony of God at his Baptiſm, the Miracles at his Crucifixion, the Signs and Wonders, done by Him, and by others in his Name, in the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit of Truth.

6. *This is he that came by Water and Blood, even Jeſus Chriſt; not by Water only, but by Water and Blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth Witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is Truth.*

7. Thus we have three Witneſſes in Heaven, who (tho' three Perſons are one in Nature, and ſo) cannot diſagree.

7. *For there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe Three are One.*

8. We have likewiſe Three on Earth, which (though differing in Nature, yet) agree in the Matter of their Teſtimony.

8. *And there are Three that bear Witneſs in Earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood; and theſe Three agree in One.*

9. If then three fallible Men are depended upon, when concurring in their Evidence, ſhall we not much more rely on the Evidence of an infallible God?

9. *If we receive the Witneſs of Men, the Witneſs of God is greater; for this is the Witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son.*

10. This is a Principle, which when received, fills a Man with perfect Satisfaction in the Truth of it; but when rejected is a conſtructive giving of God the Lye, as declaring his Teſtimony not worthy to be believed.

10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Witneſs in himſelf; he that believeth not God, hath made him a Liar, becauſe he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son.*

11. The Subſtance of which Teſtimony is, that God hath provided an Eternity of Happineſs for good Men, to be attained in and by his Son.

11. *And this is the Record, that God hath given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.*

12. So that our Title to that Happineſs is good, or void, according as we have, or have not, Faith and Intereſt in that Son of his.

12. *He that hath the Son hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life.*

COMMENT.

THE great and glorious Things, which our Bleſſed Saviour hath done for Mankind, are not intended to excuſe his Followers from Action; but to enable them for it, and to render them ſucceſsful in it. Therefore, from the Contemplation of that Conqueſt, which by his Death and Reſurrection He hath already won, the Church very fitly and naturally leads us, in the Epiſtle for this Day, to That, which every Diſciple of *Jeſus* is expected to aſpire after, and to gain in his own Perſon. The World is one of thoſe Enemies, againſt which every Chriſtian engages ſolemnly and formally, at the Inſtant of taking that Profeſſion upon himſelf in Baptiſm. And our Entring into this Covenant, The new Relations we contract there, The new Life we then begin and engage to lead, And the Communications of God's Holy Spirit, received in that Sacrament, to ſtrengthen, and enable us to perſevere, in the faithful Diſcharge of thoſe Engagements, do in Effect make up our Second and ſpiritual Birth. So that the Perſons *born of God* are Baptized and Faithful Chriſtians; And the Scripture now in Hand does not only imply the Neceſſity ſuch lie under of fighting and conquering, by ſaying, that *whatſoever is born of God, overcometh the World*; But it acquaints us, what Weapon is put into their Hands for that Purpoſe, by adding, *And this is the Victory, that overcometh the World, even our Faith.*

In order to make due Profit of this Paſſage, I ſhall from hence take Occaſion to enquire, *Firſt*, What we are to underſtand by *the World*. *Secondly*, What by *overcoming it*. And *Thirdly*, What is the Nature of that *Faith*, by virtue whereof this *Victory* is obtained.

I. I begin with the *Firſt* of theſe; Which it is abſolutely neceſſary to get a right Apprehenſion of. For, till we know the Adverſary, with whom we are bound to contend, we cannot poſſibly underſtand, either the Nature of that War we are required to wage, or the

Duty of waging it, or when we have approved ourſelves good Soldiers in it.

By the *World*, we are ſometimes to underſtand the *Perſons*, and ſometimes the *Things*, in it. But, that neither the One nor the Other of theſe can be meant here in their utmoſt Latitude, is plain, from the Reaſon of the Thing, and from the manner of St. *John*'s uſing this Word. For both theſe repreſent the World to us, as a dangerous Enemy; Such as cannot be loved with Innocence and Safety, but muſt be forſaken and oppoſed with all our Might; ſuch as, if yielded to, made Truce with, and received into our Friendſhip, ſets us at Enmity with God, and betrays us into certain Ruin.

But now, The *Perſons in the World* we are under manifold Obligations to love, and live friendly with. Their common Relation to God, Their mutual Alliance to each other, The Laws of Nature, and thoſe of the Chriſtian Religion, all conſpire in demanding it of us. The *Things of the World* are alſo ſuch, as He, who created and beſt underſtood them, hath approved, and declared to be *very Good*. They are contrived for our Uſe and Service; They miniſter not only to the Neceſſities, but to the Comforts and Conveniencies, of the preſent Life. They are ſuch, as we have natural Appetites and Inclinations to; And we are unqueſtionably allowed, by all honeſt Methods, and in convenient Meaſures, to ſeek them, for our Subſiſtence and better Accommodation. But in regard, through the Degeneracy of Human Nature, our Affections are apt to exceed their proper Bounds; and an inordinate Love both of the Perſons and Things of the World becomes the Occaſion of much (in a manner of all) Sin to us: Hence it is, that the World is repreſented as our Enemy; Hence, that we all do ſolemnly renounce it in our Baptiſm; Hence, that our Saviour is ſaid to *ſave* his Diſciples *from*, and to *chooſe them out of it*; Hence, that we are commanded

Gen. i. 31.

James iv. 4.

Gal. i. 4.
John xv. 19.

commanded not to *love it*; Hence, *laſtly*, that the Word, throughout the *New Teſtament*, is generally uſed in a bad Senſe; and That, in each of the Reſpects already mentioned, as it concerns both the *Perſons*, and the *Things*, of the World. 1 John ii. 15.

In all Theſe, and in ſundry Paſſages of like importance, we are plainly to underſtand, by the *World*, That, which St. *Paul* hath, with particular Diſtinction and Significance, called the *Evil* World. With regard to Perſons, the *World that lies in Wickedneſs*; Thoſe that are called *the Children of this World*, and ſo are oppoſite to them of another Race and Family, who, my Text tells us, are *born of God*. The World then, in this Acceptation, denotes the naughty Men in it, the corrupt Principles, and diſhoneſt Practices, and ſinful Cuſtoms and Faſhions, which ſuch People proceed upon, and indulge themſelves in, and are induſtrious to propagate, and bring into credit and general vogue. And, with regard to the Things of the World, the Pomps and the Vanities, the Honours and Riches, and Pleaſures, that miniſter to Pride, and Exceſs, and all manner of Sin and Folly. Such as engage our Deſires and Endeavours in the purſuit of Them, as of our proper Happineſs; and, by faſtening down our Affections to this Earth and its Enjoyments, leave us none, or but little Reliſh of, Zeal for, or Delight in, ſpiritual, and diſtant, and infinitely better things. Thoſe Treaſures, which God hath provided in another World for them that love him: And which our Bleſſed Saviour hath commanded every Chriſtian firſt and principally to love and ſeek. Gal. i. 4. 1 John v. 19. Luke xvi. 8. Matt. vi. 33.

Laſtly, Becauſe the Perſons, who miſbehave themſelves in theſe reſpects, are exceeding numerous; As well as becauſe the Principle they act by, is that Complacency in the preſent State of Things, which the

Scriptures have condemned under the Character of a *Senſual* and *Worldly* Mind; Therefore, by an uſual Figure of Speech, denominating the Whole from the much greater Part, thoſe Perſons and thoſe Things are called *the World*.

Let this ſuffice for the Diſcovery of our Enemy, and what St. *John* here means by *the World*. Our next Care muſt be to enquire in the

II. *Second* place, What it is to *overcome the World*, and who they are that do ſo. Now, by what went before I take it to be ſufficiently plain, that, in order to overcome the World, as that Word imports the Wicked *Perſons* in it, We muſt not be carried away with the Torrent of any Faction, though never ſo ſtrong, nor *follow a Multitude*, though never ſo great and powerful, *to do Evil*. We muſt not ſuffer any Relations or Friendſhips, though never ſo intimate and dear, to engage us; Any Dependencies and Intereſt, though never ſo advantageous, to allure us; Any Threats, or Fears, or Diſpleaſures, to awe and affright us; Any the ſubtleſt Perſuaſions to ſeduce us; Any Examples, though never ſo prevailing and authoritative, to draw us; Any Practice, though never ſo general and common, to inſnare us, in even the moſt ſpecious, the moſt profitable, the moſt faſhionable Sin. We muſt refuſe the leaſt Compliance, beyond the Rules of our Duty, and the Dictates of our Conſcience. This is, in our Saviour's Language and Meaning, *not to love Father or Mother* More than Him; but to hate even our deareſt Relations, for the Zeal we have to become his Diſciples. Nay, not this only, but we muſt be content with the Jeſts and Scoffs, the Cenſures and Reproaches, of Preciſeneſs, Singularity, or whatever elſe it be, by which Men of profligate Manners and debauched Principles endeavour to laugh, or to rail thoſe Perſons out of their Religion, who refuſe to run into the ſame Exceſs of Riot with themſelves.

Exod. xxiii. 2.

Matt. x. 37.

ſelves. We muſt not content ourſelves with a private and ſolitary Piety; but employ the beſt of our Skill and Diligence, our Credit and Power, (as Chriſtian Prudence ſhall direct, and as our reſpective Stations and Capacities admit) to inform the Ignorant and Miſtaken, to ſettle the Weak and Wavering, to encourage and ſtrengthen the Timorous, to reduce and reſcue the miſerable Wretches, (for ſurely they are of all Wretches moſt miſerable) whom Fear, or Partiality, or Intereſt, or any of thoſe Weakneſſes, which the Scripture implies, under the Phraſes of *reſpecting* or *being afraid of the Face of Men*, have enſlaved to the Temptations of Satan, and the Will of his Inſtruments, for promoting Wickedneſs in the World. In one Word, They, who by their Advice and Endeavours, by their Conſtancy and Courage, by their Reproofs, (where thoſe may be ſeaſonable) and eſpecially by their good Example, (which can never be unſeaſonable) do not only ſecure their own Virtue, but propagate it in other People: Theſe are true Subjects of the Kingdom of Grace. And none but theſe anſwer the Character of overcoming the World, So far as that Word imports here the corrupt Cuſtoms, the reigning Principles, the general ill Influence, of the unbelieving and debauched Part of the World; and the many, and the great Patrons and Ringleaders of both, that abound in it.

This for the *Perſons*. Then for the *Things* of the *World*: Methinks it is of itſelf ſo very plain, as not to need any Proof, That, in order to overcome *the World* in this Senſe, the leaſt that can poſſibly be needful, is, that none of its Pleaſures or Advantages be ſuffered ſo far to bear Sway over our Affections, as for Their Sakes to draw us into Sin. For Theſe (it ſhould always be remembered) are the very Baits, which the Tempter caſts before us, in order to our Deſtruction. Their Agreeableneſs and Convenience to the preſent State of Human Nature are the very Cauſes of our

Danger with regard to them. Without them we cannot live; but we muſt not make them the End of Living, by placing our Happineſs in them. The Deſires of them cannot be either avoided, or totally extinguiſhed; and yet, if we give a looſe to thoſe Deſires, and let them run out beyond their Bounds and Meaſures, we are undone. Therefore the true Maſtery to be aimed at in this Point, is to ſeek, and to uſe, and to value them, to rejoice in the Poſſeſſion, or to be afflicted for the Loſs of them, in their proper Place, and Time, and Degree. And what is proper in theſe Caſes, though ſo very few ſeem to be truly ſenſible, yet it would be no hard Matter to underſtand; Were Men diſpoſed to judge impartially in the Caſe, and did they but ſet themſelves in good earneſt to conſider the Nature of the Things, and the Purpoſes they were intended to ſerve.

Septuageſima Sunday *Epiſtle.*

Concerning the Nature of all Worldly Advantages, enough hath been ſaid heretofore, to ſhew, that, if it were lawful for us to make them the ultimate Object of our Deſires, yet are they not capable of anſwering thoſe Deſires; but all muſt end at laſt in Emptineſs and Diſappointment, and ſad Regret for our own Folly. Almighty God indeed hath ſuited his Laws to the Condition of his Creatures. He hath commanded us to love the Things about us, in ſuch Proportion, as does not cauſe, but moſt effectually prevent, our Unhappineſs; by making Our Neceſſities, and Their Uſefulneſs, the true Standard of our Concern for them. He hath appointed Theſe, as Means to bring about a far more precious End; But That is ſuch an End, and Theſe are ſuch Means; that neither the Poſſeſſion nor the Privation of them is abſolutely neceſſary. Becauſe either the One or the other, may be inſtrumental in bringing it about. For Virtue and Piety here, and Heaven and complete Holineſs hereafter, are the Things we ought to aim at. And theſe may be attained, either by the Content-

Contentedneſs and Patience of the Poor, or by the Moderation and Liberality of the Rich: By the Reſignation of the Afflicted, or Sick, or in Pain, or under Diſgrace; as well as by the thankful Obedience of the Proſperous, or Healthful, or Eaſy, or Honourable. From whence it plainly follows, that the Things of the World are not themſelves any part of our real Happineſs: That they contribute no farther to it, than, as they become Occaſions of exerciſing the Virtues, and putting our Minds in the Frame and Temper, proper for the Circumſtances of Life, we then are in. And he, who conſiders and is convinced of This, if he will act conſiſtently, cannot deſire or love them for their Own Sakes, but purely as Inſtruments and Helps to Virtue. Conſequently, He cannot deſire them with any great Impatience, nor love them with any immoderate Tenderneſs; Becauſe, though they be Comforts and Encouragements, yet are they not eſſential to that, which he loves and deſires moſt, and in order whereunto alone it is, that he deſires and loves theſe things at all. So then, to receive and improve every Diſpenſation of Divine Providence, in ſuch manner as ſhall advance our Virtue; To have that principally in view, and to manage not only all Events ſo dextrouſly, but even all our Paſſions with ſo maſterly a Hand, as to continue ſteady to our main Point, and make all turn to a good Account there; This I take to be *Overcoming the World*, in the ſecond Senſe of that Word, as it imports the *Things* of the World.

And if all this be neceſſary to the Conqueſt, which every Chriſtian is bound to make; then how few, alas! how very few, are the Men, who approve themſelves Conquerors indeed? How many are there in truth, ſo far from waging this War ſucceſsfully, that they never heartily engage in it at all? The Ambitious, the Covetous, and the Voluptuous Man, are ſo far from triumphing over, that they are perfectly led into Captivity, and live in direct Slavery to the Enemy, they have

have ſolemnly liſted themſelves againſt. For They who prefer their Pleaſure to their Duty, Or are content to ſacrifice their Souls to any Worldly Intereſt, how great and valuable ſoever; do manifeſtly prefer the Means to the End, take that for their Happineſs, which at beſt can be but an Inſtrument and Help to it. Nay they quite pervert the Uſe, theſe Things were intended for; and turn that into an Inſtrument of Ruin and Miſery, which was deſigned to facilitate and promote their Happineſs; intended to be ſubſervient to, but never to be, nor in its own nature poſſible to be, the true and ultimate End of their Actions. This is the Caſe of Them, who would ſubmit to do wickedly, even upon the higheſt Conſiderations. And then, how vile and wretched is Their Slavery, who are ſatisfied to drudge on in a Courſe of Sin and Injuſtice, whoſe very Buſineſs is Wickedneſs and the World, and that, upon ſo very poor Profits, as the Generality of People, in the way of Trade and Dealings with one another, are ſatisfied to ſell their Conſciences for, every Day they live?

But even, when we are arrived ſo far, as not to conſent to any Wickedneſs, upon the Account of Worldly Advantages; this will not ſuffice to gain the Victory mentioned here as a Mark of our Spiritual Regeneration. For That ſuppoſes ſuch a Maſtery over our Paſſions, even with regard to things in their own nature innocent, as ſhall make the World ſit looſe about us, reconcile us to every Diſpoſal of Providence, preſerve an Evenneſs and Reſignation of Mind, and be content to part with any, or all, our Comforts here below, when God ſees fit to command them from Us, or Us from Them. In ſhort, No Man, who clings ſo cloſe to any of theſe Conveniences, as to be immoderately exalted with Proſperity, or broke with Afflictions, As not to love his God and Saviour better than every thing elſe, As not to diſtribute of his Abundance chearfully, Not to delight in doing good with

with his Talent, more than in hoarding it up, to be better pleaſed with his Devotions than his Diverſions, with the Improvement of his Virtue, rather than that of his Eſtate, who would not chooſe to be the Leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than the greateſt Monarch upon Earth; He, I ſay, who hath not wrought his Mind up to this noble and generous Frame, though not a Slave, like thoſe Men of Sin, we deſcribed before, is yet but in a State of Combat, the Succeſs of which is ſtill doubtful. He is certainly far ſhort of that truly Chriſtian Heroick Bravery, which hath actually *overcome the World.* He in effect is no better than one of thoſe *double-minded* Men, reproved by St *James*; whoſe diſtorted Affections have one Mind for the Creator, and another for the Creatures; Who are borne down, ſometimes with the Evidence of Religion, and the Teſtimony of their own Conſciences; and at other Times again, by the Weight of ſome Worldly Conſideration, and the Violence of their own Paſſions, Theſe, as he ſays, are *toſt like a Wave of the Sea, unſtable in all their Ways*; Ever floating between two; They ebb and flow, grow better or worſe Men, gain or loſe Ground in this ſpiritual Encounter, juſt as the One, or the Other of theſe Principles, happens at that time to be uppermoſt. But now the true Conquerors of the World are diſtinguiſhable by nothing more, than a conſtant and uniform Manner of Temper and Behaviour. And this muſt needs proceed from the loving of God with *all the Heart*, and *with all the Mind*, and *with all the Soul*, and *with all the Strength*. For by this Love alone it is, that we can be Victorious; A Love, that bears no Rival, that values nothing in Compariſon, much leſs admits any thing into Competition, with Him; And conſequently maintains an abſolute Dominion over all below. For nothing here below will ever be able to controul or diſturb us, except when ſuffered, either to ſhut God out from our Hearts, or to divide

Jam. i. 6, 8.

divide them with him. If the former be our Caſe; we have hired ourſelves out to a wrong, a tyrannical, a mercileſs, and an unprofitable Maſter. If the latter, we are parted between two Maſters, and do in effect ſerve neither: In both caſes we are Slaves, and otherwiſe we cannot be, till entirely devoted to, and continually employed in, that Dear Lord's Service, which is *perfect Freedom*.

But are any of us in good earneſt ſufficient for ſuch a Conqueſt? Can a Nature mortal and frail, liable to our Neceſſities, born with our Appetites, bred up in the daily Experience, and ſenſibly convinced of the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life ariſing from thence, ſo abſtract himſelf from this World and the Things of it, that they ſhould no longer retain any Place in his Affections and Concern?

This is the Objection, commonly brought againſt thoſe Arguments, which would perſuade Men to get above the World, and to aſſert that Liberty, which Reaſon and Religion are intended to ſecure to them. An Objection, countenanced indeed by a prepoſterous Way, found out by ſome for overcoming the World; Which is, To go ſo far out of it, as to have no more to do with its Cares and Concerns. But retiring into Vows and Cloiſters is rather a quitting the Field, than a winning of the Battle. Be ſure, it cannot be the Conqueſt meant in the Text, which all the Regenerate are expected to make. This muſt be General; but the Practice laſt mentioned, neither can, nor ought to be ſo.

But the Anſwer is plain and eaſy. That the moſt active Life is capable of this Conqueſt; That no ſuch Deſires or Love of Earthly Things are unfit, as ſerve the Neceſſities of Nature, the true Uſe of the Creatures, or the innocent Enjoyments and Conveniencies of Life. That, for the reſt, though Human Powers alone are not of Force to ſubdue our Inclinations; yet there is a Principle capable of doing it, which every Man may be armed with; which every Chriſtian pretends and is preſumed

preſumed to have: And they, who have it and uſe it, will continue impregnable to all the rude Aſſaults or treacherous Allurements of this Enemy. For warring againſt whom ſucceſsfully, St. *John* hath here directed us to the only effectual Expedient, by adding, *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.*

III. By the *Victory* we are to underſtand the Means or Inſtrument of obtaining it. And by *our Faith* is intended the Belief of the Chriſtian Religion, as it is delivered down to us in the Goſpel, and ſummarily contained at Ver. 5, in this one Article, that *Jeſus is the Son of God.* Hereby are implied, a firm Aſſent to the Truth of his Doctrines, a ſtedfaſt Reliance upon the Merit of his Sufferings, and an aſſured Expectation of his glorious Promiſes. Doctrines, which a Perſon Divine could not have taught, had they not been true. Sufferings, which, becauſe undergone by a Perſon Divine, cannot but be of infinite Worth and Efficacy. Promiſes, which a Perſon Divine can and will make good to the uttermoſt. And therefore, to Men, whoſe Minds are poſſeſſed with this Belief, the Difficulty of overcoming the World is more than balanced, by that abſolute Certainty of a future Reward, and by the Excellence of that Reward. A Reward incomparably, unconceivably, beyond any Happineſs this World can give. A Reward peculiar to Them, who are content to deſpiſe and reject the preſent leſs, in proſpect of the diſtant greater Bliſs: Which this Son of God hath pledged his Truth moſt ſolemnly for; Nay, hath already inveſted Human Nature in, by exalting our Fleſh to the Right Hand of the Majeſty on high.

So that, upon a juſt ſtating of the whole Matter, the Point at laſt turns upon this; That We, in fighting againſt, and overcoming the World, do not deny or contend with Nature, but only the Corruptions of Nature. We reduce and reſtrain our Deſires of Things agreeable here; But we chooſe to do it as an Expedient to get into our Poſſeſſion Things infinitely more agreeable

agreeable hereafter. 'Tis true, The one Sort are Present, and the Object of Sense, which gives us a Certainty of them; The other are Future, but not less certain; Because they are the Object of Faith. For God can no more deceive us, than even our own Sight and Experience can. Let it but be our Care, to have this Spiritual Shield always in readiness to fix our Minds in this Belief, and be continually conversant with God and Heaven, by Pious Meditations, and Acts of Holy Hope; and when our Hearts are set upon their true Treasure, the false ones here below will be so far from captivating our Affections, that they will scarce be able to disquiet, or make a Resistance of any Consideration against us. In a word, Faith is the very Principle, by which we attain to our Second and better Birth: It is the Seed of that New Life in us, which implies a new Heart, and new Affections; A dying to the Vanities, and Corruptions, and inordinate Desires of the World, and a Love and Likeness of God, by which we resemble our Father, and by that Resemblance prove ourselves his Children. But of this Resemblance one material Part is such an Indifference to the Things of this World, as becomes Them, who look upon themselves to be only Sojourners here, but have their Hope and Home, their Relations and Friends, their Dwelling and Inheritance, in another and better Country.

See Epist. 4 Sund. in Advent, *and 6 after* Epiphany.

In virtue of this Faith it was, that Difficulties and Dangers, Scourgings and Imprisonments, Tortures and Death, have been encountered, endured, defeated, triumphed over, by that glorious and invincible Army of Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, who have fought this good Fight, and approved themselves more than Conquerors in it. And What should hinder Us from being equally successful? Their Passions and Infirmities were the same. Our Arms and Assistances are the same. Human Nature, and the Christian Religion,

gion, continue unchangeable in every Age of the Church. They conquered not thro' their own Strength, but thro' Him *that loved them*; And He *that loved Them*, loves Us alſo. And provided We be careful not to degenerate from ſuch Principles and ſuch Examples, will be equally ready to ſuſtain us in our Combat, and to recompenſe us for it, and after it, with the ſame Crown of Life and Righteouſneſs. Rom. viii. 37.

The Firſt Sunday after EASTER.

The GOSPEL.

St. John xx. 19.

19. *THE ſame Day at Evening, being the firſt Day of the Week, when the Doors were ſhut, where the Diſciples were aſſembled for Fear of the Jews, came Jeſus and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

PARAPHRASE.

19. The Evening of that Day, the Diſciples keeping cloſe for Fear, our Lord found Means (probably by opening the Doors of the Room miraculouſly, as an Angel afterwards did thoſe of St. *Peter*'s Priſon, *Acts* xii.) to come to them, and ſaluted them.

20. *And when he had ſo ſaid, he ſhewed unto them his Hands and his Side. Then were the Diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord.*

20. To take off their Surprize and Fright at this unexpected Viſit, he convinced them that it was his very Perſon, and his real Human Body, which they ſaw. Comp. *Luke* xxiv. 37—40.

21. *Then ſaid Jeſus to them again, Peace be unto you. As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you.*

21. When they were compoſed, he repeated his former Salutation; and gave them the ſame Commiſſion (ſo far as their Office and Circumſtances required) to teach and govern his Church, which he had hitherto executed in his own Perſon.

22. *And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.*

22. And, to ſhew the Fulneſs of that Authority, by which he delegated this Power to them, he did not only command them to receive the Holy Ghoſt, but did it with the Ceremony of breathing on them, to ſhew, that the Gift of the Spirit which empowered them, was His.

23. Adding withal a Declaration, that, whatever they did in the due Execution of this Office, as to the keeping in, or ſhutting out from, the Sacraments and Privileges of his Church, by reaſon of ſuch Sins as made Perſons unworthy of them; Or as to admitting Men in, and reſtoring to this Communion, upon Faith and Repentance; ſhould be ratified in Heaven, and have the ſame Effect there, with regard to the Eternal State of ſuch Men; as their Proceedings had here, for their Communion with his Church on Earth.

23. *Whoſe ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whoſe ſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.*

COMMENT.

THE Demonſtration, which our Lord vouchſafed here to give of the Reality of his Reſurrection, hath been already conſidered, among many others of that kind. I only add on this Occaſion, that the Manner of coming in to the Diſciples, mentioned in the Paraphraſe, ſeems moſt agreeable to his Deſign of convincing them, that the Body they then ſaw, was the ſame that had died on the Croſs. Opening the Doors by his Almighty Power left all the Proofs for this in their full Force; But the penetrating thoſe Doors, ſuppoſed to remain ſhut, is an Operation ſo inconſiſtent with the Nature of a Human Body, that it muſt in reaſon have added to the Confuſion of the Diſciples. This muſt rather have confirmed their Suppoſition of ſeeing a Spirit; and would be as ſtrong an Objection, againſt our Lord's having Fleſh and Bones at that time, as either their Seeing or their Handling could be for it.

Goſpel for Eaſter-day.

My Deſign at preſent is to inſiſt upon the Nature of that Commiſſion granted to the Apoſtles, in the Goſpel for this Day. The rather, becauſe the due Extent of it, though perfectly underſtood, (no doubt) by the Apoſtles themſelves, hath yet been, either through Ignorance or Subtlety, ſo variouſly enlarged

or

or reſtrained in ſucceeding Ages; as to become the unhappy Occaſion of great Diſputes, and lamentable Diviſions in the Chriſtian Church. Into theſe Controverſies it is no Part of my Purpoſe to enter. I rather chooſe to conſider the Importance of thoſe Words, *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you*, in ſuch a Meaning, as they plainly and naturally bear; and ſuch as, one would think, every ſober and unprejudiced Chriſtian muſt needs acknowledge in them. And that is Threefold.

I. Sending upon the ſame Deſign.

II. Sending with an Authority, ſo far the ſame, as was neceſſary to compaſs that Deſign.

III. Sending with the ſame Aſſurances of Love, and Protection, and gracious Aſſiſtance.

I. By *ſending* the Apoſtles, as his *Father had ſent Him*, it cannot, I think, be queſtioned, but that our Lord meant ſending them upon the ſame Deſign, which himſelf came about. Now this he often expreſſes, by *doing the Work*, and *ſeeking the Honour, of him that ſent him*. Which are but other Terms, for propagating and eſtabliſhing the Kingdom of the Meſſias, by the Belief and Obedience of his Bleſſed Goſpel. One Part indeed of this Deſign there was, and one of the moſt eſſential and neceſſary Parts of it, peculiar to Chriſt alone. That I mean, of Dying to take away the Sins of the World, by the Sacrifice of himſelf. This He only was ſufficient to take away, and ſo to ſave *them to the uttermoſt who come to God by him*. To ſave All, provided All come: But the directing Men how they muſt come, and aſſiſting thoſe that do come, are things to be done by theſe Perſons, and their Succeſſors. In theſe reſpects they might, and it is expected they ſhould, be ſerviceable, by wiſe and holy Inſtructions, by ſeaſonable Reproofs, by pious and ſhining Examples, by oppoſing all dangerous Deluſions and Errors; By ſhewing their People the good and the right Way; By going before them in that Way; Heb. vii. 25.

And by doing all this, with a Zeal ſo indefatigable, with a Reſolution ſo ſincere, with a Courage ſo unſhaken; as, if their Duty call them to it, even to lay down their own Lives, after their Great Maſter's Example, for the Teſtimony of the Truth.

This is the Deſign they were appointed to promote, The Salvation of Souls. For this End the Father ſent his Divine Son; For the ſame End that Son ſent his Apoſtles: And not them only, but as many as ſhould ſucceed them, ſo long as that Miniſtry ſhould continue to be needful; that is, ſo long as there were any Souls to be taught, and to be ſaved. A mighty and difficult Work, a rich, an ineſtimable Treaſure, that ſuch are intruſted with. The Conſideration whereof ought, much more than ſad Experience ſhews it uſually does, prevail with all Chriſtians to pray moſt heartily, to pray inceſſantly, for a Bleſſing upon the Labours of theſe Men. Nor only ſo, but every one is bound (by a kind Acceptance of, and ready Concurrence with their good Advice) to eaſe the Burthen, and contribute to the Efficacy and Succeſs, of an Authority intended for the Edification, and not for the Deſtruction of the People committed to their Charge. Which leads me to

II. A *Second* thing meant by *Chriſt's ſending theſe* Apoſtles, *as his Father had ſent him*; that is, with a Power and Authority, like that, which his Father had given him. Himſelf is ſtiled in Scripture the *Miniſter of the Circumciſion*, the *Apoſtle and High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion*, *the Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls*, and that *Great and Good Shepherd of the Sheep*. And theſe Diſciples, and their Succeſſors, have likewiſe the Honour to be diſtinguiſhed by the Titles of *Miniſters*, *Apoſtles*, *Biſhops*, *and Paſtors of the Flock*, *Ambaſſadors of Chriſt*, *and in his Stead*, *and Fellow-workers together with Him*. Now, in communicating theſe Denominations, the Holy Ghoſt muſt, in all reaſon, be ſuppoſed

Rom. xv. 8. Heb. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 25. Heb. xiii. 20.

Epheſ. iii. 7. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. Eph. iv. 11. 2 Cor. v. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 1.

ſuppoſed to impart the ſame Authority intended by them. Only with this Difference; that *Jeſus* is the High Prieſt, the reſt ſubordinate to him: He the Great and the Chief Shepherd, whoſe own the Flock is; They deputed by Him, accountable for their Truſt to him, and depending upon a Reward for their faithful Diſcharge of that Truſt, from him. Now the Exerciſe of this Authority, ſo nearly reſembling his, muſt needs, I ſhould conceive, extend to the *Three* following Inſtances at leaſt.

1. A Power of ordering and making ſuch Laws and Conſtitutions, as ſhall, from time to time, be found neceſſary, for the good Government of the People committed to their Care. In the Eſſential Parts of Religion they are bound up indeed, and cannot go beyond the Word of their great Law-giver, to ſay leſs or more. Here all they have to do, is to explain, illuſtrate, or, in Terms more expreſs, to declare, the Senſe of Scripture, where Paſſages are dark, and ambiguous, and wreſted to wrong Purpoſes. And thus far even our Bleſſed Lord himſelf declares his own Commiſſion to have been limited alſo: *I have not ſpoken of myſelf, but the Father which ſent me, he gave me Commandment, what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak. And I know that his Commandment is Life everlaſting; whatſoever I ſpeak therefore, even as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak.* As for Points of Belief then, and general Practice, their Buſineſs is to hold faſt *the Form of ſound Words*, not *to depart from the Holy Commandment, and earneſtly to contend for that Faith which was once*, (once for all) *delivered to the Saints.* But, in Matters which are circumſtantial only, and in their own Nature variable, they are left at large to preſcribe what ſhall ſeem moſt expedient, for Order, and Peace, and Union, and the Beauty of Religion. Provided always, that herein they act nothing diſagreeable to the Superior Laws of Chriſt. This is a Right ſo plain, from the very Na-

John xii. 49, 50.

2 Tim. i. 13. Jude 3.

ture of the thing, that one would wonder at the Perverſeneſs of denying it. For, in regard the Church is a formed and ſtanding Society, how can we imagine it left deſtitute of a Power, without which no Society can ſubſiſt and diſtinguiſh itſelf? And ſuch a Power is that of making By-Laws and Conſtitutions, peculiar to that Body, to which every Member, who partakes of its Privileges, is bound to ſubmit: And of contriving ſuch prudent Proviſions for the ordering its own proper Affairs, as any extraordinary Emergencies, and the Difference of Times, and Places, and Circumſtances, ſhall render adviſeable and convenient.

2. Another Inſtance of this Power and Authority, committed to thoſe, whom Chriſt hath *ſent as his Father ſent him*; is, Admitting into Communion, puniſhing the Offenders of thoſe in it, caſting out the Incorrigible, receiving Satisfaction from the Penitent, and, upon ſuch Repentance, releaſing the Penalty and Guilt. Here lies the true Exerciſe of thoſe Cenſures, and thoſe Abſolutions of the Church which our Lord elſewhere calls the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*. With how good Reaſon, what follows both here and there, ſufficiently declare: *viz.* Becauſe They, who bear them by our Lord's Commiſſion, and open and ſhut with them, agreeably to his Will and Direction, ſhall find all their regular Proceedings ratified in the Court above. For this is intended by thoſe laſt Words of this Goſpel, *Whoſe ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe ſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* So that theſe Sentences are not ſo properly the Perſon's pronouncing, as they are Chriſt's in his Mouth. Not His Act, but a Declaration of God's Act, and an Intimation, what will by him be irreverſibly fixed, in the laſt Great Day of Account. So deplorably loſt are all thoſe unthinking and impenitent Wretches, who either wilfully cut off themſelves, or, by their incurable Obſtinacy, conſtrain their Governors, to cut them off, from the Myſtical Body of Chriſt.

Matt. xvi. 19.

3. The

3. The *Laſt* Inſtance of this Authority, which I ſhall mention at preſent, is that of appointing their Succeſſors, and chooſing proper Perſons to adminiſter in the Sacred Offices of the Church. Without ſuch a Succeſſion how ſhould Religion be kept up? Therefore the ſame Reaſon which moved Chriſt to delegate his Apoſtles for a Supply to his Abſence, ſtands equally good for their delegating Others, for a Supply to their Mortality. This we find to have been the Practice of the Apoſtles themſelves; and we may eaſily ſee, by what Hands it was done. They were *Timothy* and *Titus*, to whom St. *Paul* gives Rules and Characters for Biſhops and Deacons. Of the Former it is ſaid, that he received the Gift that was in him, by the *laying on the Hands of the Preſbytery*. And, to prevent any falſe Conſequences, that ſo doubtful a Word might countenance, the ſame is ſaid to be in him, by the *putting of St.* Paul's *own Hands*. To this Perſon, thus qualified, St. *Paul* commits the Cure of the Church of *Epheſus*; as he did that of *Crete* to *Titus*, with this particular Article in his Commiſſion, that he *ſhould ſet in Order the Things that were wanting, and ordain Elders in every City*.

1 Tim. iv. 14.

2 Tim. i. 4.

Tit. i. 5.

And theſe *Two* Inſtances laſt named are of equal Neceſſity with the Former, to the well-being of any Society. For every ſuch Incorporation muſt have a coërcive Power within itſelf, for calling to Account ſuch Offences, as may be detrimental to the Body; and for determining Conditions, for enjoying the external Privileges peculiar to it; and decreeing, what Breach of ſuch Conditions ſhall abate, or ſuſpend, or totally forfeit and exclude from, ſuch Privileges. And this is the conſtant Practice of the Church. Not with regard to the Fundamentals of Religion, for thoſe, I have already ſaid, are unalterably fixed by our Bleſſed Lord himſelf: But in Matters of Order and Diſcipline, and ſuch other Circumſtances, as in their own Nature

are indifferent and variable, according to the Wiſdom of our Lawful Governors. To whoſe juſt Authority, they who refuſe Submiſſion, are for that Diſobedience and Contempt, and not merely for the Importance of the Thing commanded, (conſidered abſtractedly from ſuch Command) cenſured and puniſhed deſervedly.

Nor is it leſs Eſſential to the Order of any Society, that its Offices and Adminiſtrations be not left open and in common; But that, to prevent Uſurpation and Confuſion, Overſeers and Directors be regularly choſen and conſtituted; and that they have ſolemn Marks impreſſed, to diſtinguiſh them from the reſt of the Members, and preſerve the Regard due to their Character.

It ſhould always be remembered, upon this Occaſion, that the Authority, entruſted by Chriſt with his Apoſtles, and by them delivered down to Poſterity, is of a Spiritual Nature. Thus much is implied in the Form of giving it, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.* Thus much by our Lord's Declaration elſewhere, that *his Kingdom is not of this World.* For the making whereof good, he hath ordered and conſtituted the whole Frame of it ſo, that the Kingdoms which are of this World, have nothing to fear from thence. For Chriſt hath ſecured his own Territories, by making this Power wholly diſtinct from the Temporal, as to the Subſtance, End, and Object of it: And he hath ſecured the Temporal from Invaſion, by leaving the Spiritual ſubject to That, under Chriſtian Princes, and in ordinary Caſes; Who, as Guardians of Religion, direct and regulate the publick Exerciſe, and limit the outward Execution of its Juriſdiction as to all its Effects in any Civil Regards. Thoſe therefore, who from hence take Occaſion to domineer over Princes, and uſurp the Civil Sword, become guilty of that, which the Apoſtles blame elſewhere, by *uſing their Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciouſneſs,* and *ſerving not the Lord Jeſus, but their own Belly.*

John xviii. 36.

1 Pet. ii. 16.

III. *Thirdly,*

III. *Thirdly*, By Chriſt *ſending* his Apoſtles, as his *Father ſent him*, we are to underſtand his owning, aſſerting, protecting, and ſucceeding, their Labours and their Perſons, as his Father had done to Him and His. Of this no reaſonable Queſtion can be made, by any, who conſiders his Diſcourſe to thoſe Diſciples in the xivth, xvth, and xvith Chapters of this Goſpel: The manner of his recommending them to God in the xviith, or the Leave he took of them at his Aſcent into Heaven. From hence reſults the firmeſt Aſſurance, that the conſtant peculiar Providence of God ſhall attend them, that his Grace ſhall aſſiſt them, that the Marks of his Favour ſhall follow them, in the Diſcharge of their Duty. That they ſhall not want the pleaſing Comfort of ſeeing their pious Endeavours proſper in their Hands; Or if they do, that then their Perſeverance and Patience ſhall be taken into the Account: And, the leſs Joy they have here, the greater Recompence ſhall be reſerved for them hereafter. That ſhall be Meaſure, preſſed down, ſhaken together, and running over, poured into their Boſom. At which time alſo they will not fail to ſee the ſignal Vengeance, and eternal Condemnation, of thoſe incorrigible Creatures, who would not be perſuaded by their Advice, nor amended by their Reproofs. And, though this laſt be but a melancholy Contemplation, and ſuch as they would much rather wiſh there were no Occaſion for; yet it is ſuch a Method, as the Juſtice of God and the neceſſary Vindication of Truth require. Even that they, who will not glorify God by their Obedience, ſhall do it, whether they will or not, by ſuffering moſt terribly for their Diſobedience.

Matth. xxviii.

It were therefore much the wiſeſt Way, for Men to *account of Us, as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God:* Since he vouchſafes to eſteem us ſo, who hath promiſed to be *with us alway even unto the End of the World.* And thoſe that are ſerious and holy, will ever eſteem us ſo. A profligate Perſon, or a profligate

1 Cor. iv. 1.

Matt. xxviii. 20.

profligate People, is never more certainly diſtinguiſhed, than by giving themſelves a Liberty of vilifying their Clergy. For it is not the Man, but the Employment, that gives Diſguſt; and Religion itſelf is ſtruck at through the Sides of thoſe, who adminiſter it's Offices. This, I am aware, is a very tender Point. And if we, with St. *Paul*, attempt to *magnify our Office*, what he did out of Conſcience, we ſhall be thought to do out of no very commendable Principle. Since therefore we are looked upon too nearly intereſted, to be well heard in a Cauſe ſo much our own; let One ſpeak for us, who is above all Exception, and who will be heard at every one's utmoſt Peril. Now to thoſe who labour to render us and our Profeſſion odious and contemptible, the Holy Ghoſt applies himſelf, among others, in theſe two very remarkable Paſſages. The One, that of our Bleſſed Saviour, *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* The Other, that of St. *Paul*, *He that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not Man, but God, who alſo hath given us of his Spirit.* The Sum whereof is, That They, who uſe the Repreſentatives of Chriſt ill, would uſe their Maſter ſo too, if they had the ſame Power and Opportunities. How much better would it become Men, who call themſelves Chriſtians, to conſider the Importance and End of our *High Calling*, and to *eſteem us very highly in Love for our Work's ſake?* For an Eſteem no doubt there is due to the Character and Profeſſion; which no perſonal Defects in him that bears it, can abſolve Men wholly from paying. But even for Theſe, and indeed for all the reſt, it ſhould be the conſtant and moſt fervent Deſire of every private Chriſtian, That it would pleaſe God to *illuminate* every *Biſhop, Prieſt, and Deacon with true Knowledge and Underſtanding of his Word*, and *that both by their Preaching and Living they may ſet it forth and ſhew it accordingly.* Which may our Good Lord grant, for *Jeſus Chriſt* his ſake.

Luke x. 16.

1 Theſ. iv. 8.

1 Theſ. v. 13.

The Second Sunday after EASTER.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty God, who haſt given thine only Son to be unto us both a Sacrifice for Sin, and alſo an Enſample of Godly Life; Give us Grace, that we may always moſt thankfully receive that his ineſtimable Benefit, and alſo daily endeavour our ſelves to follow the bleſſed Steps of his moſt Holy Life, through the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Iſai. liii. 1 *Pet.* ii. 19, 24.

The EPISTLE.

1 Pet. ii. 19.

19. *THIS is thank-worthy, if a man for Conſcience toward God endure Grief, and ſuffer wrongfully.*

PARAPHRASE.

19. To ſuffer meekly and without Blame, and to do this out of a Senſe of a Reſignation due to the Will of God, is a Virtue he kindly accepts, and will not fail to reward.

20. *For what Glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your Faults, ye take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

21. *For even hereunto are ye called, becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an Example that we ſhould follow his Steps:*

21. This ſuffering patiently, not only when we do well, but even for doing well, as hard as it may appear, is yet exactly agreeable to your Profeſſion. This ſuppoſes you Followers of Chriſt, and never was there ſuch a perfect Pattern of this Virtue; So perfect Innocence, *ver.* 22. and ſo perfect Patience, *ver.* 23.

22. *Who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth:*

23. *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not; but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.*

24, 25. They were Our Sins, not His own that he died for; And he died in the quality of a Sacrifice, to bear the Puniſhment of them, and to make the Atonement for them. (The End of which Sacrifice we do by no Means anſwer, unleſs we mortify the Power of Sin, as he bore the Penalty of it.) So exactly did he fulfil the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, in his liii[d] Chapter; both as to the loſt Condition you formerly were in, and as to the Method of recovering you out of it.

24. *Who his own ſelf bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin, ſhould live unto Righteouſneſs: by whoſe Stripes ye were healed.*

25. *For ye were as Sheep going aſtray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Biſhop of your Souls.*

COMMENT.

THE Epiſtle for this Day conſiſts of Two Parts: The One, an Exhortation to Patience, enforced by the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour. Who in his Death and Paſſion, and the manner of ſuſtaining them, hath left us a Pattern of the brighteſt Innocence moſt injuriouſly oppreſſed, and of the moſt invincible Meekneſs and Submiſſion, under that Oppreſſion. The Other is a Declaration of the End and Deſign of that Death, and in what Quality he condeſcended to ſuffer; Which was in the Nature of an Expiatory Sacrifice, for the Sins of Others. The former of theſe hath been ſpoken to already, upon the Epiſtle for the *Sunday before Eaſter*. The latter was ſo largely explained, in the Comment on the Epiſtles for *Wedneſday before Eaſter*, and *Good Friday*, that I cannot think it needful to detain my Reader any longer upon Either; but chooſe to refer him back to thoſe Diſcourſes, for any Remarks, which might have otherwiſe been proper for this Place.

The Second Sunday after EASTER.

The GOSPEL.

St. John x. 11.

11. *JEſus ſaid, I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep.*

PARAPHRASE.

11. I am that eminent and ſpiritual Shepherd, foretold by the Prophets. See *Iſai.* xl. and *Ezek.* xxxiv. and xxxvii. And I prove myſelf to be ſo, by my Care and Affection for my Flock, preferring their Safety before my own Life.

12. *But he that is an Hireling, and not the Shepherd, whoſe own the Sheep are not, ſeeth the Wolf coming, and leaveth the Sheep, and fleeth: and the Wolf catcheth them, and ſcattereth the Sheep.*

13. *The Hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an Hireling, and careth not for the Sheep.*

12, 13. So do not they, who have no farther Aim, than their own private Eaſe and Advantage, in watching over the Sheep.

14. *I am the good Shepherd, and know my Sheep, and am known of mine.*

15. *As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father; and I lay down my Life for the Sheep.*

14, 15. I approve, and love, and protect my Sheep; They in return love and obey Me. Which mutual Regards bear ſome Proportion to thoſe between my Father and me.

16. *And other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold; them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my Voice; and there ſhall be one Fold and one Shepherd.*

16. But this Flock I deſign to enlarge, and to take in the Gentiles alſo, who will receive and obey my Doctrine. And thus, of them and the *Jews*, ſhall One univerſal Church be conſtituted.

COMMENT.

THE Epiſtle concludes, with giving to our Bleſſed Saviour the Title of *Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls.* The Goſpel does not only introduce that Saviour taking that Denomination to himſelf; but giving

giving a Reaſon, why it belonged to him, in a manner ſo peculiar, that no other can preſume to lay the like Claim to it. The Ground of this is laid in a Degree of Love, ſo tender and ſo coſtly, as none beſides ever came up or near to; No leſs, than laying down his own Life, for the Benefit and Preſervation of his Flock, which otherwiſe muſt inevitably have fallen a Prey to that ravening Wolf, whoſe conſtant Practice it is to hunt, and devour poor defenceleſs Souls. The Greatneſs of this Love, and the Returns we are obliged to make for it, have been largely and frequently illuſtrated heretofore: Particularly, when treating upon thoſe Paſſages of Scripture, which repreſented to us our Lord's Sufferings and Death, upon the Approach of *Eaſter*.

That, which I would principally inſiſt upon at this Time, is the Character, we are here deſcribed under. And in purſuance of this Argument, I ſhall enquire, *Firſt*, What ſort of Perſons thoſe are, which Chriſt here calls his Sheep: and *Secondly*, Wherefore he chooſes to call them by that Name.

1. The Thing I chiefly aim at in the Former of theſe Enquiries, is, What Relation they bore to Chriſt, whether they were actual Believers or not, whom he dignifies with that Name.

A Queſtion this, which ſome Interpreters have not thought it worth while to trouble themſelves about. But to my Apprehenſion, it is of conſiderable Uſe, toward underſtanding the true Importance and Force of our Saviour's Diſcourſe upon this Subject.

And here I muſt acknowledge an Appearance of great Weight, in thoſe Arguments, which have induced learned Men to think, that this Title is not confined to them only, who had made actual Profeſſion of the Faith, and embraced his Doctrine; But that, by way of Anticipation at leaſt, it extends to all ſuch, as were ready, and in fit Temper of Mind, to receive and ſubmit to it, as ſoon as it ſhould ſufficiently diſcover itſelf

itſelf to them. What other Conſtruction can poſſibly agree with *thoſe other Sheep*, ſo named at the *Sixteenth* Verſe, though not as yet brought into the Fold? Theſe doubtleſs are the Gentiles, who at that Time were ſo far from making a Part of Chriſt's Church, as not to be competently inſtructed in the Worſhip and Confeſſion of the One True God. As for the Terms of Salvation by the Goſpel; the Method fixed for communicating theſe was, not to carry them to the World in common, till the *Jews* had not only enjoyed this ineſtimable Privilege, but had incurred the Guilt of deſpiſing and thruſting it away from them. All theſe Conſiderations ſeem manifeſtly to apply the Title of Sheep, to Many who were not yet, as well as thoſe comparatively Few, who actually were Believers, at the Time of our Lord's Diſcourſe now before us. This Remark will, I conceive, be yet more confirmed, by the Next Thing I ſhall ſpeak to,

2. The Reaſons why our Lord ſhould chooſe to call them by this Name. Of which it ſhall ſuffice to take Notice of theſe Two. Now,

1. *Firſt*, That this Alluſion was very proper and pertinent, in regard of the Perſons, with whom our Saviour argued, the Condition and Cuſtoms of that Country may convince us. For the greateſt Part of the Wealth and Improvement there, conſiſted in Sheep. And the Examples of *Jacob* and *David* in particular are Proofs, that the keeping of theſe was not uſually committed to Servants and Strangers, as we generally find it in theſe Parts: But Men of the greateſt Quality and Subſtance, the Children of the Family, nay the Maſters and Owners themſelves, made it their Buſineſs; and eſteemed the looking to their Flocks a Care and Employment, in no Caſe below them. Hence probably came that frequent Metaphor of ſtyling Kings the Shepherds of their People. Hence *Iſrael*, God's peculiar Treaſure, are ſo often ſtyled *the Sheep of his Paſture*. Hence the antient Prophecies deſcribed the *Meſſiah*,

siah, in the Character of a Shepherd. Under which accordingly he thinks it no Diſhonour, in the Scripture now before us, to repreſent his Government of, and tender Concern for Mankind. Intimating hereby, that he is not only the Watcher and Director, but the Maſter and Proprietor of the Flock. Hence laſtly, *David* was then a moſt ſignificant Type, not of his Government only, but of that entire Affection, and Concern for the Preſervation of his Spiritual Sheep; when he hazarded his Life, and ſlew the Lion and the Bear, which came to prey upon his Flock, and reſcued out of their Jaws a poor helpleſs Lamb, ſeized by thoſe ravenous Beaſts.

But although This Conſideration rendered a Similitude ſo well underſtood, both ſeaſonable and reputable with the Jews: Yet, I preſume, there was another, which might, at leaſt as much, induce him to make Choice of it. One, that ariſes from the very Nature and Diſpoſition of this ſort of Animals, and carries ſome Reſemblance and Proportion, to the Mind and Temper of the Perſon, ſignified by this Metaphor. Therefore let it be conſidered,

2. *Secondly*, That Sheep, as all of us very well know, are remarkable for their peculiar Simplicity and Sweetneſs of Temper. There is ſomething in them, that appears ſo innocent and inoffenſive, ſo peaceable and gentle, ſo patient and ſubmiſſive, ſo honeſt and undeſigning; that they gain more upon the Tenderneſs of Mankind, than moſt other Creatures. They are not Beaſts of Prey or Force, of Sullenneſs or Subtlety. They are apt indeed to ſtray: But they do it in a manner, that moves our Pity, rather than our Anger. For they do it heedleſly, without the leaſt Appearance of Stubbornneſs; and are glad to be reduced again, and eaſily obey the Shepherd's Call.

Now theſe Qualities are ſo many lively Images of that Plainneſs and Probity, that Modeſty and Humility, that Quietneſs and Submiſſion, which prepare and

fit

fit Men for embracing the Doctrine of Chriſt. A Doctrine calculated for the Peace and good Correſpondence of Mankind; and therefore by no Means agreeable to thoſe Monſters in Human Shape, the Bears, and Wolves, and Tigers, that bite and devour one another. A Doctrine that inculcates Juſtice, and Equity, and fair Dealing; and is not like to recommend itſelf to thoſe knaviſh Foxes that take a Pride in crafty Contrivances for outwitting and over-reaching one another; but fitted for *Iſraelites indeed*, in whom is no Falſhood or Guile. A Doctrine, that requires ſtrict Purity, enjoining every one to *poſſeſs his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour:* And ſo, never to be well reliſhed by thoſe Goats and Swine, who will be ſure to tread this Pearl under Foot, and diſdain a Religion, which forbids them to wallow in the Filth of Intemperance and Riot, and any manner of ſenſual polluted Pleaſures. In one Word, a Doctrine fitted to perſuade, and ſo not like to loſe its Effect upon the Meek and Unprejudiced, the Honeſt and the Conſcientious, thoſe that are willing to be inſtructed, and eaſy to be reclaimed: But never deſigned to bear down the Obſtinate and Perverſe, whoſe Pride, or Paſſions, or Intereſts, will not conſent to hear it, without Partiality and Prepoſſeſſion.

John i. 47.

1 Theſſ. iv. 4.

Such is the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion: And ſuch muſt be the Qualifications of all, who embrace it heartily and to purpoſe. For, though it be the very End of this Religion, to correct and ſweeten the Tempers of Men, and bring them off from theſe Indiſpoſitions: Yet ſtill we are to remember, that the Will is the Part to be wrought upon. And, let the Remedy be never ſo powerful in itſelf, no Service can be done to a Patient, who refuſes to apply it. Therefore, that Some are cured, and Others in no Degree relieved, proceeds not from want of Virtue in the Medicine; but becauſe Some are orderly, and content to undergo

the

the Operation; and Others are unruly, and inflexibly ſet againſt it. They, who ſubmit to it, ſoon find the Benefit. The happy Improvements made, by their own Ingenuous Dealings, and the aſſiſting Grace of God, which never fails to ſucceed our Deſires and Endeavours after Holineſs, are quickly diſcerned to make a mighty Change in Such; by ſubduing the corrupt Affections of Nature, and exerting all thoſe Heavenly Qualities, which, in the beſt and ſtricteſt Senſe, juſtify this Metaphor, and denominate them Chriſt's Sheep. By theſe they recommend and endear their Souls to Him; and engage his Affections to ſo high a Degree; that he does not diſdain to compare the Tenderneſs on His Part, with the incomprehenſible Love of God the Father to the Son; nor the cheerful Duty on Their Part, to the willing Obedience of God the Son to that Father. And ſure it is fit, this ſhould approach as near it, as the Frailties of Human Nature will allow it to riſe.

Thus have I briefly explain'd the Foundation of this Parabolical Alluſion; And in ſo doing, have made it eaſy for every Reader to infer both his Advantage and his Duty. By this Time we may ſee, how gracious a Shepherd we are bleſſed with, and what Diſpoſitions in our Minds, what Habits in our Practice flowing from thence, are expected in his Sheep; how Men muſt be prepared to receive the Chriſtian Religion; and how they are to live, when they have received it. I will now conclude with one Word or two, concerning the Goodneſs of this Heavenly Shepherd. Which is principally intended for the Support of thoſe weak and melancholy Mourners, who humbly diſtruſt their own poor Performances, and are full of Fears about their Eternal State; becauſe their honeſt Intentions and Endeavours are allayed with great Failings, and interrupted with many ſore and ſhocking Temptations.

For this End I would put ſuch Perſons in Mind of Two eminent Paſſages in the Prophets. The very

Purport

Purport whereof is Comfort and Encouragement, to every Soul within this Fold, by a Deſcription of Chriſt's incomparable Wiſdom, and Gentleneſs, and Care over all that make up this Flock.

The *Firſt* is that of *Iſaiah*'s fortieth Chapter, Ver. 11. *He ſhall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, he ſhall gather the Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his Boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with Young.* What can better expreſs the affectionate Concern, and wonderful Prudence, of a gracious Maſter? One, who diſtributes all neceſſary Refreſhments; that Grace, which nouriſhes and ſtrengthens us in a Spiritual and Divine Life; that very Body and Blood of his, which is our Myſtical Suſtenance: For this is feeding his *Flock like a Shepherd.* One, who protects and cheriſhes the Harmleſs and the Feeble, the Meek, and Patient, and Peaceable-minded, the Men of good Deſires, and hopeful Beginnings; For theſe are the *Lambs* in Chriſt's Flock. One, who tires none with hard Uſage and Over-driving; lays no more upon any, than they are able to bear; requires no more from any, than they are able to perform; but kindly conſiders the Slow and the Heavy, allows for Meanneſs of Parts and Attainments, for want of Ability and Opportunities, and thus *gently leads thoſe that are with Young.*

2. Yet, gentle though his Diſcipline be, and large his Allowances, and practicable, nay eaſy, his Commands; How often do We break looſe from them? How often, even far beyond what the Frailties of our Nature can fairly be pleaded in excuſe for? But even here we are met by Mercy and Compaſſion again. He *pities*, not only the *Ignorant*, but thoſe that are knowingly *out of the way* too; when they are content to ſee their Error, and return. His Love prevents our final Miſery, makes up our Breaches, ſtops our wild Stragglings, and ſnatches us back from Ruin, even when we had brought ourſelves to the very Brink of the Pit. To the Sinners there-

Hebr. v. 2.

fore, who are humble and penitent, *Ezekiel*'s Deſcription of Chriſt's Paſtoral Care ſpeaks Health and Conſolation, Ch. xxxiv. 16. *I will ſeek that which was loſt, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will ſtrengthen that which was ſick.* And what unthankful, what vile Wretches are We now, if we do not make it our conſtant Endeavour to know, and love, and ſerve, and imitate this good Shepherd? O let that Prayer of the Apoſtle be Ours, and let our Lives give Evidence, that we pray it in good earneſt.

May the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the Everlaſting Covenant, make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight. To whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Third Sunday after EASTER.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty God, who ſheweſt to them that be in Error the Light of thy Truth, to the Intent that they may return into the Way of Righteouſneſs; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the Fellowſhip of Chriſt's Religion, that they may eſchew thoſe Things that are contrary to their Profeſſion, and follow all ſuch Things as are agreeable to the ſame, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Phil. i. 27. *Eph.* v. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. 1 *Pet.* ii. 11.

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

1 *St.* Pet. ii. 11.

11. *DEarly beloved, I beſeech you, as Strangers and Pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul.*

11. Conſider, that your Citizenſhip is in another World, and in this you are but Paſſengers; do not therefore gratify thoſe ſenſual Appetites, which aim at preſent Enjoyments, and are oppoſite to thoſe Deſires of the Soul, that place and ſeek their true Happineſs in Heaven.

12. *Having*

12. *Having your Converſation honeſt among the Gentiles; that, whereas they ſpeak againſt you as Evil-doers, they may by your good Works, which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the Day of Viſitation.*

13. *Submit yourſelves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake; whether it be to the King as ſupreme;*

13. See *Comment* on Epiſt. of 4 Sund. after *Epiph.* for the Senſe of this and the three following Verſes.

14. *Or unto Governors, as unto them that are ſent by him, for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and for the Praiſe of them that do well.*

15. *For ſo is the Will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men.*

16. *As free, and not uſing your Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciouſneſs, but as the Servants of God.*

17. *Honour all Men. Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King.*

17. Pay every Man the Reſpect due to his Character, even Heathens themſelves. Bear an affectionate Regard to all your Fellow-Chriſtians,—*&c.*

COMMENT.

THE Epiſtle for this Day begins with enjoining our Endeavours to obtain that Bleſſing, which the Collect prays for. It admoniſhes us to behave ourſelves as becomes *Strangers and Pilgrims*; which the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion (by inculcating the Belief of a future, as our chief and proper, Happineſs) have taught us to eſteem ourſelves. And it adds a very ſubſtantial Reaſon why we ſhould deny thoſe Appetites, which purſue the preſent Enjoyments too eagerly; becauſe the Views of Senſe, and thoſe of Faith, are ſo very different, and contrary to each other. How this comes to paſs, and why it cannot be

otherwiſe, the Reader may find an Account in the Comment on the Epiſtle for the *Second Sunday* in *Lent*. As he may, of the remaining Part of this Portion of Scripture, the Obedience required to our Governors, the Meaſures of, and Motives urged for it, in that on the Epiſtle for the *Fourth Sunday* after *Epiphany*. So that I think myſelf at Liberty to proceed to the Conſideration of the Goſpel; having nothing here material, which hath not been ſpoken to already. Eſpecially, if, concerning any Doubts that may ariſe upon the former Part of the 17th *Verſe*, (though that ſeems to be ſufficiently clear of itſelf) the Epiſtles for the *Second* and *Third* Sundays after *Epiphany* ſhall be thought neceſſary to be conſulted.

See alſo Epiſtle for Epiph. *and* Adv. *Sund.* 1.

The Third Sunday after EASTER.

The GOSPEL.

St. John xvi. 16.

16. *JEſus ſaid to his Diſciples, A little While and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little While and ye ſhall ſee me, becauſe I go to the Father.*

PARAPHRASE.

16. The Time is now approaching, when I ſhall be taken from you (by Death.) But that Separation ſhall not be long, for I will return and converſe with you again (after my Reſurrection at the End of three Days), yet this alſo ſhall be but a ſhort Interview, becauſe I muſt aſcend into Heaven.

17, 18. His Diſciples who were ſtill confounded at every Mention of his Death and Reſurrection, knew not what to make of theſe dark Expreſſions.

17. *Then ſaid ſome of his Diſciples among themſelves, What is this that he ſaith unto us, A little While and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little While and ye ſhall ſee me: and, Becauſe I go to the Father?*

18. *They ſaid therefore, What is this that he ſaith, A little While? We cannot tell what he ſaith.*

19. *Now Jeſus knew that they were deſirous to aſk him, and ſaid unto them, Do ye enquire among yourſelves of that I ſaid, A little While, and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little While and ye ſhall ſee me?*

20. *Verily,*

20. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoice; and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy.*

20. The Sufferings and Death I am about to undergo, ſhall be Matter of extreme Sorrow and Diſcomfort to You; but the World ſhall inſult and triumph greatly upon that Occaſion. But your Sorrow ſhall be ſhort, and ſwallowed up in the Joy of beholding me riſen from the Dead.

21. *A Woman when ſhe is in Travail, hath Sorrow, becauſe her Hour is come; but as ſoon as ſhe is delivered of the Child, ſhe remembereth no more the Anguiſh, for Joy that a Man is born into the World.*

22. *And ye now therefore have Sorrow: but I will ſee you again, and your Heart ſhall rejoice, and your Joy no Man taketh from you.*

21, 22. And as that of a Woman in Travail, is ſucceeded by a ſolid and durable Joy; ſo ſhall Yours be upon my riſing from Death, and by all the Benefits attending that Reſurrection: which will prove it paſt the Power and Malice of my Enemies, and yours, to deprive you of the Satisfaction this ſhall bring you.

COMMENT.

THE Importance of this Paſſage is no doubt expreſſed in the Paraphraſe; if we regard its firſt Senſe and immediate Deſign, the Time when, the Occaſion upon which, and the Perſons to whom, it was ſpoken. But why may we not, as St. *Auguſtine* adviſes here, enlarge our Thoughts a little, by looking upon the Diſciples to be, as then they really were, the Church Univerſal in ſo many Perſons? In this extended Senſe, their Calamity will repreſent every good Man's Affliction; the Shortneſs of that will anſwer to the momentary Troubles of the preſent Life; The Three Days Abſence of our Lord, to that comparatively *little while*, (for a little while even This is, when ſet againſt Eternity) between his Glorious Aſcent into Heaven, and his infinitely more glorious Return to Judgment. The Triumphs of his Reſurrection will be a proper Emblem of that Laſt Day, when *All Enemies ſhall be put under his Feet*; and Death ſubdued, not by the Head only, but by each Member, of his Myſtical Body. 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.

And laſtly, the Joy his Diſciples conceived, at our Lord's reſtoring himſelf to them the *Third Day*, will prefigure that inexpreſſible Satisfaction, which muſt needs flow from the Sight of his Glorified Body, the Enjoyment of his Preſence, and the Bliſſes of an immutable State in Heaven.

Thus ſurely we ſhall very well promote our Church's Deſign, in recommending this Scripture to our Attention yearly. And, to make the beſt Improvement I can of our Concern in it, I ſhall briefly conſider, *Firſt*, The State of good Men at preſent, as a State of Trouble: *And then*, the Quality of that ſucceeding Joy, which they are allowed to expect and depend upon, both as a Comfort under, and a Recompence for, their preſent Trouble.

I. For juſtifying the former of theſe Conſiderations, we need not have Recourſe to the Ages of Perſecution; but may venture to ſuppoſe the moſt profound Tranquillity, with regard to Church and State. And yet, even thus, I appeal to common Experience, whether any good Man's Affairs have been in ſo perfect Repoſe, that he ſhould, with Regard to his own Particular, have Cauſe to think the World miſrepreſented, when called *a Valley of Tears*, and the Adverſities ſo incident to Human Nature, the *Taxes*, as it were, and *Incumbrances* upon Life. Shew me the Man, whoſe Term of Years hath been all white; checquered in no Part with Loſſes or Diſappointments, with Injuries or Vexations, in his Eſtate or in his Reputation, in his own Perſon or in ſome very dear to him, whoſe Sufferings he ought to be affected with, and in good meaſure to eſteem his own.

Theſe Things are ſo notorious, ſo common to the Greateſt and Beſt of the Sons of Men; that the Minds of ſome thinking Perſons have been confounded at them. And the more Ignorant have called that the Tyranny and Blindneſs of Fortune, which Chriſtians are taught to believe, is the Diſpoſition of an infinitely Wiſe, and Juſt, and Good Being.

But

But yet, be the Things never ſo ſeaſonable in themſelves, Tryals they are ſtill to the Perſons lying under them. Many Conſiderations may prevail for bearing our Chaſtiſements decently; but none can hinder ſuch from being at the preſent not *joyous but grievous*. With the Woman in this Goſpel, we may find Reaſon to entertain our *Travail* with Bravery, to forget, nay even to bleſs it, for the good Fruit we find from it: But the Pain is ſtill Pain, the Senſe of it acute for the Time; and the Throws muſt be over, before they can be forgotten for *Joy that a Man is born into the World.* Hebr. xii. 11.

But let us ſuppoſe a Providence ſo propitious, as ſhall ſcreen a Man from all Occaſions of Diſquiet from without. Yet how ſhall he eſcape thoſe too juſt Uneaſineſſes, that ariſe from within? Muſt not every one be born again by Repentance, and *Renewing of the Mind?* And hath not the Spiritual Birth its Pangs and violent Convulſions too? Let the returning Prodigals ſay, what Agonies of Conſcience, what Reproaches, what Terrors, what Zeal, what Prayers, what careful Tears, what tedious Conflicts, it hath coſt them, before they had Strength to come to this Birth. They, whoſe early Principles and pious Education have ſaved the Trouble of a thorough Change, have yet *the Fleſh and its Affections to crucify*. And can there be a Crucifixion without Torment? Can a *Right Hand be cut off* without Smart? Or a *Right Eye be plucked out*, and the Party never feel it? No ſure. So long as there are Injuries and Misfortunes without, and Luſt and Frailties within, and Hazards from both; ſo long, in a greater or leſs Degree, may every one moſt truly apply to himſelf, what our Lord here hath ſaid to his Diſciples, *And ye now therefore have Sorrow.* Rom. xii. 2. Gal. v. 24. Ver. 22.

II. But, praiſed be God, that Sorrow is not to laſt always; and Chriſtians are happy above the reſt of Mankind, that they can ſee to the End of it. For ſuch

is that Joy, promiſed in the Cloſe of this Goſpel, which makes my *Second Head*. And this, according to the Deſcription given of it there, comes now to be conſidered in the *Three* following Reſpects.

1. The Ground of it, in thoſe Words, Ver. 22. *I will ſee you again*. How reviving was the Accompliſhment of this Promiſe to his Diſciples, when, at his Return from the empty Tomb, they found all their Hopes alive again, their Faith confirmed, and their Courage rendered invincible, in the Sight and Enjoyment of Him? But, if the Continuance of this for Forty Days only, could inſpire ſo juſt a Joy; What Raptures, what Tranſports muſt poſſeſs all the Faithful, when they ſhall attain the *End of* 1 Pet. i. 9. *their Faith, even the Salvation of their Souls?* When they ſhall ſee, and dwell, and converſe, and reign, with their dear Lord for ever; When their own Bodies ſhall be glorified, this Veil of Fleſh and Frailty drawn away; When Faith and Hope ſhall ceaſe, and be ſwallowed up in Fruition; And, to ſum up all in St. *John*'s Phraſe, (which indeed implies and comprehends all) when they ſhall be drawn into a Likeneſs with God, and 1 John iii. 2. *ſee him as he is?*

2. This leads me to conſider a *Second* Property of this Joy, the Truth and Solidity of it I mean, intimated in thoſe Words, *Your Hearts ſhall rejoice*. The Enjoyments this World affords, are rather Appearances, than any Subſtance and Reality, of what they are commonly taken for. Thoſe Pleaſures that are ſinful, run ſo low, and leave ſuch terrible Stings behind, that in the midſt of that Laughter the Heart is ſorrowful. And even thoſe that are innocent, muſt not claim this Title of Satisfactions. To this nothing in Truth can have Right, which is not commenſurate to the Powers and Deſires of a reaſonable Soul. And thus nothing can be, but a Feeling of the Love and Favour of God, and a Delight, reſulting from thoſe Things which conduce to his Honour, and are agree-

able

able to his Will. We ſee what more than Conqueſt this Diſpoſition of Mind enabled the Apoſtles to attain, even in Perſecutions, and Torments, and Death. And ſhall not That, which carried them out againſt all the Violence of their bittereſt Enemies, be much more perfect, when *all Enemies ſhall be deſtroyed?* Shall not that, which brought under the Reluctancies of Human Nature, be more exquiſite, when all Infirmities of that Nature are done away? If the Heart of good Men can rejoice, when the Fleſh is in Fear and Grief; they will certainly rejoice much more, when the Body is above ſuffering; when every contrary Paſſion, and every Calamity that could provoke them is perfectly at an End. Such a Torrent as this muſt overflow all its Banks. Or rather, there will be no Banks, no Check or Confinement: Nothing beyond it to be deſired, except the Continuance of that which is incapable of larger Increaſe. And of This too we have Aſſurance, in that moſt comfortable Clauſe which ſpeaks the Certainty and Duration of this Joy.

3. The *Third* Property, expreſſed in thoſe Words, *Your Joy no Man taketh from you.* Now this is a Mode of Speech, ſet to denote an utter Impoſſibility of loſing this Joy; And that neither any Human, nor any other Means, have it in their Power to deprive us of it. And this is a moſt valuable Circumſtance indeed; ſuch as perfectly diſtinguiſhes between our future, and all our preſent Joys. Of theſe we have at beſt but very ſlippery Hold. And, were there more in them, than really there is; yet the Pleaſure muſt needs be damped with that melancholy Proſpect, that they will one Day forſake us; and we cannot be certain, that they will not do it very quickly too.

So reaſonable it appears to wean our Affections from thoſe things, which are not, cannot be, our Reſt. So juſt, to leſſen our Eſteem of them, and to lay the whole Streſs upon that one thing, which alone can avail

avail us. Suffer me therefore to apply to my preſent Purpoſe that of the Prophet *Jeremy*, *Let not the wiſe Man glory in his Wiſdom, neither let the mighty Man glory in his Might: Let not the rich Man glory in his Riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth Me, ſaith the Lord.* And reaſon good, for this *is Life Eternal, to know him the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent.* It is the only Way to it, in this World, and it is the Bliſs of it, in that which is to come. But a Bliſs in ſtrict ſpeaking it could not be, if it were not eternal; Without Interruption, without Concluſion; Liable to no Decays of Nature, no Waſtings of Time; Nothing without to deſtroy it, nothing within to diminiſh or impair it; Subject only to the Will of the Almighty Giver, and given with a Reſolution never to be taken back again. *For the Promiſes of God are unchangeable, and his Gifts without Repentance.*

Ch. ix. 23, 24.

John xvii. 3.

Rom. xi. 29.

Of ſuch comfortable Import are the Words of this Goſpel, ſpoken to the Diſciples in a very critical Juncture. And, if duly conſidered, they will have a like Effect upon Us, as they had upon Them; in proportion as Their Circumſtances and Ours agree. But ſurely Thoſe Chriſtians are without Excuſe, who do not improve them to theſe two Purpoſes at leaſt.

1. To quicken us in the Purſuit after ſo excellent a Joy. There is this good Correſpondence between the Offices of the Day, that the Goſpel enforces the Exhortation in the Epiſtle, of conſidering ourſelves as *Strangers and Pilgrims*, and ſo cutting thoſe Deſires ſhort, the Objects whereof can ſtay with us but *a little while*. And the Collect prayeth for Grace to *eſchew thoſe things that are contrary to our* Chriſtian *Profeſſion, and to follow all ſuch things as are agreeable to the ſame.* To which nothing can be more contrary, than a Senſual and Worldly Mind; Nor any thing more agreeable,

able, than ſuch earneſt Deſires, and zealous Endeavours, after future and ſpiritual Happineſs; as will not ſuffer themſelves to be diverted, by any treacherous Allurements here below. How lamentable then is the Coldneſs and Neglect ſo viſible, and ſo general, upon this Occaſion? But eſpecially, how ſcandalous is the Stupidity of theſe ſenſeleſs Wretches, who, inſtead of aſpiring after, deſpiſe and ſcoff at this Joy? Who take a great deal of Pains, not to have any Part in it, and boaſt their Refuſal, as an Act of Wit and Gallantry; as if Heaven were below a Man of Quality's Acceptance, and Irreligion and Profaneneſs were the Standard of good Breeding and good Senſe? *How long, ye ſimple Ones, will ye love Simplicity, and the Scorners delight in Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge? O turn your Ear to Reproof* betimes, before your Eaſe ſlay you, and your Perverſeneſs deſtroy you. Prov. i. 22.

2. The *Other* Uſe, we ſhould make of this Diſcourſe, is to compoſe our Minds in Time of Trouble. Let us conſider, that this cannot laſt always, that Patience bringeth forth precious Fruit, and that it will be our own Fault, if our Labours and Sufferings do at laſt prove abortive. Let us ſet the *Lightneſs* of the *Affliction* againſt the *Weight of Glory*, and the *Momentary* Paſſage of the One againſt the *Eternal* Stability of the Other. For this would be ſure to caſt the Scale, and enable us, in humble Imitation of our Bleſſed Maſter, to *endure the Croſs for the Joy that is ſet before us.* Put the utmoſt and worſt of the Caſe, that we are called to *reſiſt unto Blood*; yet, even in Death, we have this Reflection to ſupport us, that there is but that One *Pain more*, and then *the Man is born.* Born into a World of Bliſs and Immortality, to a Life of *Joy* moſt exquiſite and raviſhing to the *Heart*, and that, *a Joy which no Man taketh from him.* That Joy may God of his Infinite Mercy make every Reader of this Diſcourſe Partaker of, through the Merits and Mediation of Him, who hath ſhed his

Blood

Blood to purchaſe it for us, *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Son of his Love, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour and Glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

The Fourth Sunday after EASTER.

The COLLECT.

Jam. i. 17. *Phil.* ii. 13. *Eph.* ii. 8—10.

O Almighty God; who alone canſt order the unruly Wills and Affections of ſinful Men: Grant unto thy People, that they may love the thing which thou commandeſt, and deſire that which thou doſt promiſe; that ſo among the ſundry and manifold Changes of the World, our Hearts may ſurely there be fixed, where true Joys are to be found, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

St. James i. 17.

17. *EVery good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableneſs, neither Shadow of turning.*

17. So far is God from being the Author of Sin to us, that every Thing which tends to make us Good, or is itſelf ſo, every Spiritual Perfection, comes to us from Heaven. All the Endowments of Nature and Grace are given by Him, who created all the Luminous Bodies, and in this excels them all, even the Sun itſelf, that He does not vary, nor remove at a Diſtance from us, (like Thatin its Daily or its Yearly Motions) but is always the Same, and always at Hand.

18. *Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth, that we ſhould be a Kind of Firſt Fruits of his Creatures.*

18. His own mere Goodneſs moved him to make us his Children, by means of his Word, the Inſtrument of our New-Birth, That we (like the Firſt Fruits under the Law) might be the beſt of our Kind, and conſecrated to his Service.

19. *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, let every Man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to Wrath.*

19. Let this then induce us to be forward in learning that Word, modeſt in attempting to teach, of a meek and perſuadable Temper.

20. *For*

20. *For the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God.*

20. For the Violence of Paſſion will obſtruct the Diſcharge of the Duty God requires from us.

21. *Wherefore lay apart all Filthineſs and Superfluity of Naughtineſs, and receive with Meekneſs the ingrafted Word, which is able to ſave your Souls.*

21. We muſt therefore get quit of thoſe ſenſual and polluted Affections, (the cutting away whereof was intimated by Circumciſion) which when ſuffered to grow, will, like Suckers in a Tree, hinder that Graff of the Wood from bearing Fruit, which if received with due Temper, is able to ſave the Souls, wherein it is put.

COMMENT.

THE Scripture now before us, being more than commonly difficult, and particularly, upon the account of ſome Metaphorical Alluſions contained in it, I ſhall treat of each Paſſage in order as it lies: And, having firſt explained them a little more largely, ſhall then deduce ſuch Inferences, as are moſt practical and proper.

In order to underſtand the Beginning of it, let it be conſidered, that the Apoſtle had before directed every one *who lacks Wiſdom, to aſk it of God*; and afterwards had ſet himſelf to refute the falſe Notions ſome entertained, of him and his Providence. To the Diſpoſal hereof having rightly aſcribed all Events and Changes; they from thence very erroneouſly inferred, that he was the Author and Cauſe, of all the Sin committed by Men. Ver. 5. Ver. 13, 14, &c.

This Argument ſeems more particularly levell'd at an Opinion of the Phariſees: A Sect of all among the *Jews* in the higheſt Credit and Veneration. Of theſe *Joſephus* ſays, that *they imputed all things to Fate*, but adds, that *they did not do this in ſuch a manner, as abſolutely to deſtroy Free-will.* For reconciling this ſeeming Inconſiſtence, we ſhall do well to take Notice, that they laid great Antiq. Lib. xviii. Cap. 2.

Streſs

Streſs upon the particular Frame and Conſtitution of Men, their Humours and Complexions, and the Influences of thoſe Planets and Stars, under which they were born. Thus they made the Virtues and Vices of Men to depend upon theſe Cauſes; and ſo charg'd upon God, the Director of theſe Cauſes, that Good or Evil, which Men could hardly, with good Senſe, be ſaid to chooſe, by thoſe who held them to be by Nature formed for, and from their Birth neceſſarily determined to the One, or the Other. This Remark will be of ſome Uſe to us, in diſcerning not only the true Occaſion and Force of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning, but alſo the Propriety of the Terms, in which it is expreſs'd.

Bull. Harm. Apoſt. Diſſ. ii. Cap. xv.

In Oppoſition to this dangerous Scheme, St. *James*, writing to Chriſtians converted from Judaiſm, aſſerts every Advantage conducing to our Virtue and Perfections to deſcend upon us indeed from Heaven. Yet not from that Heaven where the Sun and other Luminous Bodies move, but *from Above*. (For this peculiar Energy ſome have attributed to that Word *Above.)* They come down from Him, who dwells in thoſe that (according to a known Diſtinction in Uſe with the *Jews)* are called the *Higheſt Heavens*. Even from Him, who is truly ſtiled the Father of Lights, as he created and conſtituted thoſe Lights and their Influences. Now he diſpoſes his Gifts and Graces in ſuch a Manner; that, whether they come to us immediately from Himſelf, or whether by the Mediation and Miniſtry of his Creatures, ſtill the Conveyance makes no Difference; but they are, either way, to be acknowledged his Gifts. He is the Author and Source, the Proprietor and the Beſtower of all Goodneſs; and all below him, are but in the Nature of Inſtruments to hand down, or Pipes through which this Fountain chooſes to paſs the Streams of his overflowing Beneficence, to any of us.

This

This Doctrine the Apoſtle hath ſhewn to be far preferable to the Other; not only as more true, but more advantageous to Mankind. For the Appearances of the Heavenly Bodies vary, and their Influences are more powerful, or feeble, in proportion as themſelves are nearer to us, or more diſtant from us. Now thoſe Bodies being continually in Motion, muſt conſequently change their ſuppoſed Power with their Situation: As they riſe or ſet, approach to or decline from our Vertical Point in their daily Motion; and as they remove at a greater Diſtance, or come back to our Latitude, in their Yearly Revolution. So that, as themſelves are not, ſo neither can the Effects attributed to them be, fixed and conſtant. But the *Father* of theſe *Lights* is immutable and omnipreſent: He is always at hand to hear and to help; and always both able and willing to do that, which he knows to be moſt for the Advantage of Them, who have Recourſe to him, for Succour and Supplies.

Of this the Apoſtle makes Proof at the 18th *Verſe*, by an Inſtance the moſt valuable of any, that could poſſibly be imagined. Even the Revelation of his Truth in the Goſpel of our Bleſſed Saviour, which is meant there by *the Word:* Nay the making this an Inſtrument of the higheſt Honour and Privilege, even our Spiritual Adoption; (for by this Word *he begat us.*) The Nature and Advantages of this New-Birth and glorious Relation to himſelf have been, I hope, ſufficiently explained and enforced in another Part of this Work. To theſe he adds the Deſign ſerved by thoſe Benefits, the ſetting Chriſtians above the Reſt of Mankind, diſtinguiſhing them by the beſt of Diſpenſations, and by a Holineſs of Life agreeable to it; conſecrating them to his own Uſe and Service, and aſſerting them for his own Peculiar, in a Degree vaſtly more honourable and beneficial, than any Thing of this Kind had ever been vouchſafed in, even to the *Jews* themſelves. For all this ſeems to be implied, in that Alluſion to the

Ep. for Sunday after Chriſtmas.

Old

Old Law, which ſtiles us a *Kind of Firſt Fruits of his Creatures.* And then, as an irrefragable Evidence of the Kindneſs and gracious Diſpoſition of this Heavenly Father, it is ſaid, that all this was his free and voluntary Act: For *of his own Will he begat us*, &c.

Thus far proceeds the Argumentative Part of this Epiſtle; and how fully it anſwers the Apoſtle's Purpoſe, theſe two Remarks will eaſily inform us.

1. By declaring God to be the Author of *every good and perfect Gift*, he ſtrengthens his Exhortation, in the Beginning of the Chapter, to beg of him a Supply of all neceſſary Wiſdom. This being a Gift agreeable to the Excellence of his Nature to beſtow, and to the Occaſions of our own to deſire; as That, which, above any other, conduces to the true Goodneſs and utmoſt Perfection of Mankind, attainable in the preſent and in a future State.

2. By obſerving the Unchangeableneſs of God's Nature and Will, he hath abundantly confuted the Error of thoſe miſtaken Men, who, by holding a Fatality in all Events and Actions, do from thence ſlide into a Conſequence not eaſy to be avoided; *viz.* the horrible Impiety of charging the Sins of Men upon God, the ſuppoſed Ordainer of that Fatality. For, what can be a greater Contradiction, than, that the Giver of all the Good, ſhould likewiſe be the Author of all the Evil, in the World? This would argue the moſt direct Contrariety in the ſame Mind. Such a one, as ſome Hereticks ſaw too abſurd to be maintained, and ſo were obliged to take Sanctuary in another as abſurd; That of Two firſt Principles, the One the Cauſe of Good, the Other of Evil. As a farther Confirmation of this, The gracious Methods of Salvation, God's revealing the Goſpel, on Purpoſe to reform, and improve, and ſave Mankind from Sin, are taken notice of. Which, all proceeding of his own mere Motion, ſhew, that the Wickedneſs of Men is moſt diſpleaſing to him. This renders him incapable of promoting that very Thing, by tempting to it; which he of his own

own accord hath contrived ſo admirable an Expedient to deſtroy, by ſo expreſsly warning Men againſt it, and ſo wonderfully preſerving them from it.

Theſe are the Inferences, moſt ſuitable to the Occaſion and immediate Deſign of this Paſſage. But We, who have Liberty to conſider it in a greater Latitude, ſhall not do our Duty, except we learn from hence, (1.) To aſcribe, with all poſſible Thankfulneſs, to this good God alone, every Advantage we enjoy, whether of Nature, of Fortune, or of Grace. Not taking to ourſelves the Glory of any, which our own Endeavours help to procure: Not depending upon any Human Aſſiſtances: Not eſteeming the Perſons, whoſe Goodneſs hath been of uſe to us, above their due Deſert. Since neither could our own Labours have availed us, without God's Bleſſing upon thoſe Labours; nor could our Friends have ſerved us, except He, who vouchſafes to chooſe them for Inſtruments of conveying his Mercy to Us, had not only furniſhed thoſe Friends with the Ability, but inſpired them with the Inclination, to do it.

2. Hence we are likewiſe taught, where in particular to lay the ineſtimable Benefit of our Spiritual Regeneration and Salvation. That it is entirely owing to God, and an Inſtance of his free and undeſerved Grace. This is true of the Deſign and Methods of it, with regard to Mankind in general; and it is equally true, of all the Aſſiſtances and Advantages for attaining it, afforded to each Man in particular. The Beginning, the Progreſs, and the Accompliſhment, of this glorious Work can have no poſſible Foundation or Motive, in the Merit of any, who are admitted to partake of it. For to every one of theſe is due the greateſt Curſe and Miſery that could happen, were he to be treated according to his Deſervings.

3. It is obſervable, that the Apoſtle aſſigns to the *Word of Truth* a Part in this Work; and ſuch a Part, as intimates it to be the inſtrumental Cauſe of our New and Spiritual Birth. Here, ordinarily ſpeaking, the Ope-

ration begins; and, what ſort of Operation that is, and of how great Conſequence its Efficacy, may be gathered from the Directions, which, upon mention of this *Word*, the Apoſtle, in the three following Verſes, lays down for our Behaviour with regard to it.

I. The *Firſt* is, Diligent Endeavours to be inſtructed in this Word, meant by being *ſwift to hear*. That is, Making uſe of all proper Means and Opportunities for underſtanding our Duty. And this extends, not only to our frequenting thoſe publick Aſſemblies, where it is explained and enforced by an Order of Men ſet apart by God for that Purpoſe; but alſo to thoſe other private Helps of Reading, and Meditation, conſulting with good Books, and converſing with good Friends; who have the Skill and the Charity, to inform us where we are ignorant, to ſet us right where we are miſtaken, and to encourage and quicken us, where we are heartleſs and remiſs. In all which the greater Care is requiſite, becauſe this is the Spiritual Food of our Souls, and therefore, like That which ſuſtains our Bodies, ought to be our *daily Bread*.

Ver. 19.

2. The *Second* is Modeſty, or, *Being ſlow to ſpeak:* Not taking upon us to be Teachers, through a vain Conceit of our own Sufficiency. Which, though it might perhaps be intended for a Reproof to the *Gnoſticks* of that Age, is yet but too applicable to Multitudes of every Age. For Multitudes there always are, who profeſſing themſelves to be Wiſe, take the moſt effectual Courſe to become Fools. Becauſe indeed it is never to be expected, that They ſhould improve in Learning, who imagine they have no further Improvements to make, and are more importunate to be heard, than forward to hear.

Ver. 19.

3. A *Third* Direction is the Government of our Paſſions, particularly that of Anger. To this purpoſe St. *James* adds, *Slow to Wrath* at the 19*th*, and recommends its oppoſite Virtue, *Meekneſs*, at the 21*ſt Verſe*. The Neceſſity hereof is declared, at the 20*th Verſe*, by ſaying that *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*. This is by ſome underſtood to regard

the Zealots among the *Jews*. A Sect, who, upon pretence of more than ordinary Concern for the Honour of God and Religion, took the Liberty to act in defiance of all Law, and Order, and even common Humanity. But it certainly is a ſeaſonable Reproof, to all of any Perſuaſion, who make the Warmth of their Zeal either a Pretence, or a real Occaſion of gratifying the Bitterneſs of their own Diſpoſition. For it acquaints us, that the Nature of Chriſtianity is to be mild and gentle, peaceable and beneficent; That it is intended to cool and calm, not to kindle or inflame our Paſſions. And that, be our Intentions never ſo ſincere, the Method of promoting Religion is certainly wrong, and the Buſineſs of it never to be done, by Heat and Fury, Uncharitableneſs and Contention.

Permit me here to name One Sort of Wrath which in a ſpecial Manner obſtructs the Word. It is That, which takes it amiſs, to be admoniſhed or reprehended, and counts them its Enemies, who tell the Truth: When Men reſent it as a Wrong and Indignity, and harden themſelves yet more, as oft as thoſe Vices are expoſed, which their own Conſcience upbraids them with the Guilt of. If this be done, as it ought always to be, with ſolid Reaſoning, and in general Terms, the Preacher only diſcharges his Duty. If it be done with Spight and particular Reflection, ſo as to expoſe the Man, rather than the Vice; This is a Weakneſs ſo below his Character, as ſhould provoke Pity, rather than Anger. But there can be no Reaſon, in either Caſe, why the Party, who feels himſelf concerned, ſhould not amend his Fault, and make ſome Profit even of another's Indiſcretion.

4. Another Direction here, is to lay aſide *all Filthineſs and Superfluity of Naughtineſs*. The Latter of theſe Phraſes hath been largely explained heretofore. And of Both, which ſignify Senſuality and Fleſhly Luſts, it is evident, that theſe Deſires are ſo irreconcileable with that Purity of Heart and Life, enjoined by the Goſpel; that it is im-

Epiſt. for Circumciſ.

possible for any, who indulges and addicts himself to them, to have any Value for, Relish of, or Benefit by, the saving Truths of it. But this having been formerly insisted on, I proceed,

Gospel Sexag. Sund.

Lastly, To observe the Significance of that Metaphor, which commands us to receive the *ingrafted* Word. Engraffing, you know, incorporates one Sort of Plant with a *Tree* of another; by which Means the old Stock is not destroyed, but a new Quality so superinduced, that the Fruit is from thenceforth changed, and made more generous. Thus the *Word* must be thoroughly joined to us, and made of a piece with us; it must penetrate, and mingle with, and influence, every Faculty of our Minds. The wild Suckers, which sprout from the old sour Stock, must be cut low and kept under, that the new Cyon may receive Nourishment, and shoot more vigorously. Thus Nature is not taken away, but its Luxuriancies pared off. Our Appetites are not extinguished, but improved, and turned to nobler Objects. Our Affections (according to the Collect for the Day) from being unruly, alter their Taste; and from thenceforth *love that which God commands, and desire that which he does promise:* And by making this happy Change in our originally corrupt Temper and Inclinations, and so becoming a Principle of a new and nobler Product; we *have our Fruit unto Holiness, and the End Everlasting Life.* And thus it is, that *the ingrafted Word* becomes *able to save our Souls.*

Ver. 22.

The Fourth Sunday after EASTER.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE. *St.* John xvi. 5.

3. *JESUS said unto his Disciples, Now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?*

6. *But because I have said these Things unto you, Sorrow hath filled your Heart.*

7. *Nevertheless*

7. *Nevertheleſs I tell you the Truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.*

7. It is more for Your Benefit, and the Advantage of my Goſpel, that this Advocate to plead my Cauſe and yours, ſhould ſupply my Abſence; becauſe ſome Things, to be done by Him, are incompatible with my Stay among you.

8. *And when he is come, he will reprove the World of Sin, and of Righteouſneſs, and of Judgment.*

9. *Of Sin, becauſe they believe not in me.*

9. He ſhall convince Men, that it was a Fault not to believe one, whoſe Miſſion ſhall be ſo amply confirmed by his wonderful Gifts:

10. *Of Righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more.*

10. And ſhall prove me a true Teacher, by that Aſcent to God, who could not ſo receive and aſſert an Impoſtor.

11. *Of Judgment, becauſe the Prince of this World is judged.*

11. And that Juſtice ſhall be done upon the Devil and all the Wicked, by the Dominion he ſhall exerciſe over evil Spirits.

12. *I have yet many Things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

12. Several Things he ſhall inſtruct you in, of which your Condition is not yet capable: (Such as the Abrogation of the Ritual Law, the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, Rejection of the *Jews*, calling in of the *Gentiles*, &c.)

13. *Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth: for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf, but whatſoever he ſhall hear, that ſhall he ſpeak, and he will ſhew you Things to come.*

13. You may depend on his Guidance, becauſe he ſhall not utter any deceitful Inventions of his own, but teach you from God, and give you the Gift of Prophecy.

14. *He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*

14. All his Proceedings ſhall turn to my Honour; for whatever Knowledge you receive from Him, he firſt received of me.

15. *All Things that the Father hath are mine; therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*

15. I ſay of Me, becauſe all the Excellencies of God the Father are communicated to Me; and therefore, his Spirit is Mine, and all that he does by Commiſſion from Him, he likewiſe does by Mine.

COMMENT.

THE Perſon and Offices of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Ends mentioned here to be ſerved by his Coming, will fall more ſeaſonably under Conſideration at another Time. That which I would now ſpeak to, is a Paſſage, which ſeems to give us ſome Aim for judging, (ſo far as we are concerned to know) what Methods the Holy Spirit uſes to take, in the ordinary Operations of his Grace; which I conceive we may get ſome Light into, by attending to that Expreſſion at *Ver.* 13. where the *Spirit* is ſaid to *guide* the Apoſtles into all Truth.

I do not by this go about to determine the particular Manner of God's Grace working upon our Minds in every Caſe. For, who is able to expreſs the infinite Variety of excellent Arts, by which he wins us over to his own Heavenly Purpoſes? All I aim at, is to gather ſo much, as may preſerve us from Error, and help forward the Practice of our own Duty. To which End alone it is, that I would now conſider the true Importance of that Guidance, aſcribed here to the Holy Ghoſt.

ὁδηγεῖν. Now the Word which we render to *guide*, does properly ſignify *leading a Traveller the Way*. The Manner of which is thus explained by *Moſes:* Who, ſpeaking of the *Iſraelites* being conducted through the Wilderneſs, ſays, that God

Deut. i. 34. *went before them to ſearch them out a Place to pitch their Tents in, in Fire by Night, to ſhew them by what Way they ſhould go, and in a Cloud by Day.* Here we have the Office of a Guide explained, by *ſhewing the Way on which they ſhould go*, and *going before them in that Way*. Thus was the Angel of God's Preſence a Guide to the *Iſraelites* of old; and thus is the Grace of God's Spirit a Guide to Chriſtians now. He directs them what Courſe to take, he warneth them againſt the Pits and Precipices, the Difficulties

Difficulties and By-paths, by which, if deſtitute of ſuch Direction, they might wander, or periſh in their Journey; and ſo he brings them forward in that Holineſs, of which himſelf is the Perfection, and the brighteſt Pattern.

Another Interpretation, deduced from this in Scripture, is that of aſſiſting and ſupporting Men in their Paſſage. Thus God is ſaid, in the Chapter laſt cited, to bear thoſe *Iſraelites*, *as a Man beareth his own Son in all the Way that they went*. The Similitude is taken from Parents and Nurſes holding Children by the Hand, being content to go their ſlow Pace, and not only guiding, but ſupporting and guarding them alſo. Thus are thoſe Paſſages commonly underſtood, where God is ſaid to have *led* Abraham *throughout all the Land of* Canaan, to *lead* Joſeph *like a Sheep, and his People like a Flock, by the Hand of* Moſes *and* Aaron; and thus the Meſſiah, the Great Shepherd, is ſaid *gently to lead thoſe that are with Young*. This ſort of Guidance the Holy Spirit performs, when He condeſcends to our Infirmities, accommodates himſelf to our Capacities, and imparts his Gifts and Graces; not according to his own Fulneſs and Power to give, but in ſuch Proportions, as the Veſſels into which they are poured, are qualified to receive them. An Inſtance whereof our Bleſſed Lord hath left, in the Scripture now before us; by omitting to *ſay many Things* unto his Diſciples, which they at that Time were not able *to bear*.

Ver. 31.

Joſh. xxiv. 3.

Pſal. lxxx. 1.
Pſal. lxxvii. 20.

Iſai. xl. 11.

Ver. 12.

From hence the Word came to be applied to the Office of a Maſter or Teacher. Thus when *Philip* aſks the Eunuch, whether he underſtood that Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, which he found him reading; the Anſwer is, *How can I, except ſome Man ſhould guide me?* This Part of a Guide then *Philip*, by Divine Appointment, undertook; and how he diſ-

Acts viii. 31.

charged it, is manifeſt from the following Account. Ver. 34, 35. *The Eunuch ſaid, I pray thee, Of whom ſpeaketh the Prophet this? Of himſelf, or of ſome other Man? Then* Philip *opened his Mouth, and began at the ſame Scripture, and preached unto him Jeſus.* His Guidance then conſiſted, in complying with the Eunuch's Deſires to be better informed, ſatisfying his Enquiries concerning the myſterious Meaning of that Prophecy, and from thence taking Occaſion to let him by Degrees into the whole Scheme of Man's Redemption by the Sufferings and Death of our Saviour Chriſt.

Such a Guide is the Holy Ghoſt too. He enlightens dark Eyes, but by ſuch Illumination, as ſuppoſes a Willingneſs to ſee. He leads Men into Paths of Holineſs and Salvation, but then he expects a Readineſs to follow. He gives Ability to perform that, which without him never could be done; but it is that, which will not be done neither, without our own Pains and Concurrence. Pſalm xxv. 8. *The Meek* (ſays *David*) *he will guide in Judgment, and the Meek ſhall be learn his Way.* But ſtill they are *Meek.* And, although he ſtrengthen our Weakneſs, and inſpire our Diſpoſitions, and aſſiſt our Endeavours, to be good; yet is he no where ſaid, by an Almighty and irreſiſtible Operation, to compel the Obſtinate, or to drag Men along whether they will or no.

Hence it will be no difficult Matter, to reconcile thoſe Texts of Scripture, which attribute our Sanctification and Salvation to the *Word*, with ſome Others which give the ſame Effects to the *Spirit* of God. The ſhort is; This is the Efficient, That the inſtrumental Cauſe. We cannot come to Chriſt, except we be drawn; and it is his Spirit that draws us; and he draws us by the Word. He gives a new Turn to our Thoughts and Inclinations, diſpoſes us to hearken, and conſider, and endeavour; and then he renders thoſe Actions and Endeavours ſucceſsful. So that all this is effected by Application of proper Means, by ſeaſonable Suggeſtions,

tions, by Influences ſo gentle and ſweet, that all is done with us, and in us. The Work is ſo much the Spirit's, that if we be treatable and willing to do our Part, he will not fail to do his: And it is ſo much our own too, that if we refuſe or neglect our Part, he will not do it, either for us, or without us.

So good Agreement may we eaſily perceive, between the Epiſtle and the Goſpel for this Day; the *Word of Truth* that *begets* us, and the *Spirit of Truth* that guides us. So exactly alike are the Prediſpoſitions, neceſſary for profiting by Both. I conclude, therefore, with moſt earneſtly exhorting every Man, as he values his Salvation, ſo to receive the One, and ſubmit to the Conduct of the Other, that each may attain its proper Effect upon him. And, ſince *Almighty God alone can order the unruly Wills and Affections of ſinful Men*; let us not be wanting to pray with our Church, that he would *grant unto* all his *People, to love the Thing which he commandeth, and deſire that which he doth promiſe; that ſo, among the ſundry and manifold Changes of the World, our Hearts may ſurely there be fixed, where true Joys are to be found, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen. Collect.

The Fifth Sunday after EASTER.

The COLLECT.

O Lord, from whom all good Things do come; Grant to us thy humble Servants, that by thy holy Inſpiration we may think thoſe Things that be good, and by thy merciful Guiding may perform the ſame, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.* *Jam.* i. 17.

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

St. James i. 22.

22. *BE ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves.*

23, 24. The latter will do you no Service without the Former. For, as Men that in a Glaſs ſee what is amiſs in their Face, but mend it not; ſo is a Man to whom the Word hath ſhewed himſelf, if he do not correct thoſe Faults, which are thus repreſented to his View.

23. *For if any be a Hearer of the Word, and not a Doer, he is like unto a Man beholding his natural Face in a Glaſs.*

24. *For he beholdeth himſelf, and goeth his Way, and ſtraightway forgetteth what Manner of Man he was.*

25. The Man who is indeed the better for his Hearing, is he, who conſiders and practiſes continually the Moral Precepts of the Goſpel. Which is called a Law of Liberty, becauſe it frees us from the Bondage of the Moſaick Inſtitution, from the Guilt and Puniſhment, and from the Dominion of Sin; and treats us as Freemen and Sons, rather than Servants. (See Epiſt. for Sund. after *Chriſtmas.*)

25. *But whoſo looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful Hearer, but a Doer of the Work, this Man ſhall be bleſſed in his Deed.*

26. *If any Man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain.*

27. That Religion, which does not only appear fair to Men, but is accepted and approved with God, conſiſts in Charity and Purity.

27. *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the World.*

COMMENT.

THE Preparations of the Mind, requiſite in order to *receive* the *Word of Truth*, had been declared by St. *James* in the foregoing Verſes, and were made the Subjects of a Diſcourſe on the laſt Lord's-day. The Deſign

Deſign of this Portion of Scripture is to prove, that *Receiving* that *Word*, in the very beſt Manner, is not ſufficient. A Truth ſo plain to any Man of common Conſideration, that one would think, there could not poſſibly be Need of Arguments to prove it. For, What is this *Word*, but a Syſtem of Laws, which God, under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, hath given Men, to direct and govern their Actions by? And, what is the End and Intent of any Law, but Practice and Obedience? Well therefore might the Apoſtle here declare, that the *Hearers only, and not Doers of the Word*, are *Deceivers* of their *own ſelves*. And well it were if the too general Behaviour of Chriſtians did not render it but too neceſſary, for the Apoſtle at that Time, and the Miniſters of this Word at all Times, to warn their Hearers againſt that Deceit. A Deceit, which, how common ſoever in Fact, is yet, in the Reaſon of the Thing, ſo exceedingly abſurd; that one would ſtand amazed, to ſee any ſingle Perſon capable of being impoſed upon by it.

However, ſince this Deluſion does but too manifeſtly prevail; a better Method for giving Check to it we cannot take, than to enforce the Apoſtle's Argument here. Which I ſhall make it my Endeavour to do, by ſhewing, *Firſt*, What the being a *Doer* of the *Word* does really import: And, *Secondly*, How groſs and fatal that Deceit is, which they, who take up ſhort of This, put upon themſelves. Under each of theſe I ſhall need no other Arguments, than thoſe, which St. *James* hath here, either expreſsly urged, or ſufficiently intimated to us.

I. I begin with explaining, what a Doer of the Word does really import, and when it is, that any of us is ſuch.

1. Now here we are to conſider in the *Firſt* Place, that the *Word* is a Term of large Extent, and comprehends the Whole of that, which God hath revealed and preſcribed to us. Conſequently, To be *Doers of the*

the Word, it is requiſite that we take the Law, as we find it laid before us. It is from hence *David* pleads his own Sincerity, and grounds his Hope and Truſt:

Pſal. cxix. 6. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed* (ſays he) *when I have Reſpect unto* all *thy Commandments.*

It is this Evidence of our Love, and this Claim to His, that our bleſſed Saviour means, when telling his

John xv. 14. Diſciples, *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.* Hence it is, that in the latter End of this Chapter, that Man's Religion is declared to be vain; who, upon making Conſcience of ſome other Duties, is blown up into a falſe Opinion of his own Sanctity, tho' at the ſame Time he *bridle*

Ver. 26. *not his Tongue.* A Failing, greatly to be lamented, and very uſual among many, who expreſs a more than ordinary Zeal for the outward and ſolemn Exerciſes of Religion. Conſtant and Devout Attenders upon publick Prayers, and Sermons, and Sacraments; ſober in their Converſation, regular and exemplary in their Families, juſt in their Dealings, even to a Nicety; Yet even theſe (ſo far very good) Perſons are oftentimes malicious Detractors, buſy Inquirers, bold Cenſurers, and bitter Backbiters. And of theſe it is, that the Apoſtle in particular repeats his Obſervation, that *they deceive their own Hearts.* Becauſe the Men who allow themſelves ſuch Liberties, do naturally, and almoſt inſenſibly, fall into that fatal Miſtake, of judging their own State by wicked and malicious Compariſons. They, from labouring to perſuade their Company into that Opinion, do at laſt come to perſuade themſelves, that they are ſo much better, in Proportion as their Slanders or Reflections have made other People appear worſe.

But altho' this be a Deceit, peculiar to the Vices of the Tongue; yet all in general deceive themſelves, who do not take the *Word of Truth*, in its juſt and utmoſt Comprehenſion. If therefore we ſpeak Comfort to our Minds, upon not being groſsly and notoriouſly

wicked;

wicked; indulging in the mean while thoſe Luſts, which no Eye ſees, and ſo our Reputation is not wounded by: if we give readily into thoſe Commands, which Intereſt or Inclination diſpoſe us to; but ſtart back, and fly off from others, which are inconvenient, or go againſt the Grain: Nay, if our Compliance with all the reſt be never ſo ſtrict and punctual, but ſome one darling Boſom-Vice be left unmortified; and we flatter our Conſciences with a falſe Hope, that *the Lord* will *pardon his Servant in this thing:* Such an Obedience is but *almoſt Chriſtian.* And though with the rich young Man in the Goſpel, we be not *far from the Kingdom of God*; yet are we not in it, nor, upon theſe Terms, ever like to come at it. For, properly ſpeaking, this is not to obſerve and ſubmit to God's, but to make our own Law, and chooſe our own Conditions. Quite contrary to a State of Subjection, which allows of no Reſerve in this Caſe. Nor is any Man a *Doer of the Word* in earneſt, and to purpoſe, whoſe Heart cannot give him that Teſtimony of the Pſalmiſt, *I hold ſtrait all thy Commandments, and all falſe Ways I utterly abhor.* Pſal. cxix. 128.

2. They who are really *Doers of the Word*, do it becauſe it is the *Word.* My Meaning is, they are good upon a Principle of Religion, and in Obedience to his Authority, who hath commanded them to be ſo. It is indeed the Glory of Religion, and will prove one Day the heavieſt Condemnation of all who deſpiſe or neglect it, that it is accommodated to all the preſent Pleaſures and Advantages, which can become a wiſe Man to deſire and purſue. But ſtill, though theſe are Motives, which may lawfully weigh with us; yet muſt they never be the principal, much leſs the only, Motives to Piety and Virtue. The Reaſon is, becauſe they can never anſwer our Purpoſe, by ſecuring the Steadineſs of Obedience. For whatever does this, muſt be itſelf, what that Obedience ought to be, laſting

laſting and unchangeable. But now all Pleaſures and Advantages of this Life are fickle and uncertain: And therefore all, that ſtand on ſo ſlippery a Foundation, muſt needs be liable to totter and fall with it. If Profit, or Eaſe, or Honour, or Applauſe be our Views; what ſhall become of us, when the Face of Affairs changes? When Intereſt and Duty are oppoſite? When Men are ſo perverſe as to hate us, and harm us, and to ſpeak all manner of Evil againſt us, becauſe we are Followers of that which is good? Muſt not a Man, who looks no further than this World, if he will act upon his own Principles, find himſelf, in ſuch Circumſtances, carried to profitable Wickedneſs, by the ſame Arguments, which before determined him to profitable Goodneſs? In ſhort, on which Side ſoever the Advantage lies, he muſt follow it; and as oft as that ſhifts Hands, his Manners will not fail to change as nimbly with it. But now the Will of God is immutable, and the Equity of his Laws ſtands fixed. This is rooted in the Nature of Things; and therefore this alone is a firm Support for our Virtue. He that acts in a due Senſe of ſuch an Obligation, hath ſomething to keep him always tight. His Obedience will not be fickle, becauſe the Ground of it continues the ſame. Neither will it be humourſome or partial; becauſe, be the Subject Matter of the Command what it will, ſtill the Authority of the Law-giver, which binds it upon his Conſcience, is, in reſpect of every Command, the ſame. And thus this ſecond Qualification ſecures the firſt. For, by *doing the Word*, as ſuch, we ſhall certainly be diſpoſed to do all the *Word*.

3. *Doing the Word* imports obſerving it, in all that Spiritual Senſe, to which Chriſtianity hath exalted our Duty. To this Effect it is, that the 25*th Verſe* hath entitled the Goſpel *the perfect Law of Liberty*. A Law, that does not, like the *Jewiſh*, impoſe things of no intrinſick Worth, ſuch as are Marks of Slavery; but ſubſtantial, and rational Inſtances of Obedience. The

Goſpel

Goſpel Precepts impoſe Duties very worthy of the moſt generous Minds; and a Service, which does not only comport with, but is itſelf a State of Freedom. To what Heights this carries our Virtue, and how much more is required now, than was eſteemed ſufficient under a former imperfect Diſpenſation, is eaſy to be gathered from our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount. Nor hath St. *James* been wanting to intimate the ſame thing to us in the laſt *Verſe* of this Chapter. He plainly diſtinguiſhes there, between a Religion, which will paſs very well upon Men; and that, which is neceſſary for recommending us *to God and the Father*. They ſee our Actions only, and in regard of them, we muſt be cautious: He is a Searcher of Hearts, and therefore nothing can gain his Approbation, which is not *pure and undefiled*. To pleaſe them we ſhall find it neceſſary to do no Injuſtice: Pleaſe him we cannot, without doing all the Good we can; Acts of Mercy and Pity; Relief to the Diſtreſſed, and Redreſs to the Injured, when theſe are in our Power; Condoling with them, and Compaſſion for them, when no more is in our Power. For all this no doubt is intended, by *viſiting the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Afflictions*. And ſo again, mortifying all our carnal Appetites, getting above the Temptations of Senſuality and Covetouſneſs, refining all our Deſires, preſerving chaſte and holy Hearts, and leading a rational and divine Life; all this, and nothing leſs, we are to underſtand, by *keeping* a Man's *ſelf unſpotted from the World*. In ſhort, the Chriſtian Religion expects from all its Profeſſors, that they ſhould not only eſchew Evil, but heartily hate and abſtain from the very Appearance of it: That they ſhould cleanſe their Hearts as well as Hands; that they ſhould do all the Good they can, and do it with Delight; and that they ſhould not only obey, but ſtudy to adorn, the Doctrine of their Lord in all Things.

4. They

4. They only are to be esteemed *Doers of the Word*, who proceed and persevere in their Duty. For thus the Apostle clearly explains himself at the 25*th Verse*, *Whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty*, and continueth therein, *he being not a forgetful Hearer, but* a Doer of the Work, *this Man shall be blessed in* his Deed. It is from hence in Truth, that the surest Judgment can be made of that Man's Sincerity. For, as the Practice of Religion is attended with many Temporal Conveniences; so they who proceed upon those false Views, may for some Time pass upon the World, and even upon themselves, for Persons of great Probity and Virtue. And yet, if any Difficulty rise, or Suffering press upon him; the Man and his false Bottom are presently discovered. That Appearance of Goodness, which, while prosperous and uninterrupted, drew the Praise and Admiration of all that beheld it, quickly provokes their Scorn, by being found an Appearance only; and is universally rejected both of God and Man. Of this Perseverance and the Necessity of it, there needs no more to be said, after our Lord's Parable of the *Sower*. He charges this Defect upon the *Stony Ground* in particular; and allows none to be good Ground, which does not *bring forth Fruit with Patience, and bring it to Perfection.*

See Gospel for Sexagesim.

I add, that the Punishment of such as fall from a good Course is most just, and the Provocation upon some Accounts more heinous, than that, given by Men who were never virtuous at all. For such Apostacy derives a double Dishonour upon Religion; and seems to say, That it hath been weighed in the Balance, and found wanting. These Men, it will be pretended, have known it, and tried it, and yet, by renouncing it, they make no Scruple to condemn their former Principle of Folly. Upon this Ground it is, that God declares by *Ezekiel*, that He, who forsakes his Righteousness, and dies in a wicked Course,

Ezek. xviii. 26.

Courſe, ſhall periſh, without any Regard to his former good Works. And ſo again, that, at what Time ſoever the wicked Man forſakes his Wickedneſs, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his Soul, and his paſt Sins ſhall never riſe up any more in Judgment againſt him. The Reaſon expreſſed in the one Caſe, is implied in the other; *Becauſe he conſidereth and turneth.* Of ſuch mighty Conſequence it will prove, in Divinity as well as Law, what a Man's Laſt Will ſhall be. For this, in both Caſes, revokes and undoes again all that went before; and the one makes as final and effectual a Diſpoſition of our Souls, as the other does of our Eſtates. Ver. 27, 28.

Thus you have ſeen the true Notion of *Doing the Word*, and how much goes to it: That it imports Obedience to the Word, in its full Comprehenſion; That, as we muſt obey it all, ſo we muſt obey it upon a right Principle; that we are to practiſe the Word in that Senſe and Perfection, to which the Goſpel hath advanced the old Moral Law; and, that none are eſteemed *faithful in this Matter*, except they who continue *faithful unto the End.* From whence the Inference is unavoidable, that all, ſhort of theſe Qualifications, is a *Deceiving of ourſelves*, and being no better than *Hearers* only. The Greatneſs and Danger of which Deceit I come now to ſet before you very briefly.

II. This is the *Second* Head I propoſed, and in ſpeaking to it, I ſhall only in general explain the Reaſon, given by the Apoſtle for this Aſſertion, and then conclude. Ver. 23, 24.

The Reaſon alledged is this. *For if any be a Hearer of the Word, and not a Doer, he is like unto a Man, beholding his natural Face in a Glaſs. For he beholdeth himſelf, and goeth his Way, and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of Man he was.* Now, by reſembling the *Word* to a Glaſs, it is the Apoſtle's Intention, to convince the *Hearers only*, and *not Doers*, that they miſtake the very End, and proper Uſe of *the Word.*

For the Uſe of a Glaſs is to repreſent Men to themſelves. But the End of that Repreſentation is, not that they may ſit, and contemplate, and fall into rapturous Admiration of their own imagined Beauty; but that they may ſee, and ſo ſee, as to correct whatever upon that View is found to be amiſs. It is thus they are to take effectual Care, that their Perſons and Habit be comely and compoſed; Which could not be taken, unleſs this beholding of their own Image had made them ſenſible, how matters are, and how they ought to be with them.

Such is the Uſe and End of the *Word* too. By comparing the Contents of this with our own Diſpoſitions and Actions, we may diſtinctly learn the State of our own Souls. And, as that is found to agree or to diſagree with the Will of God; we have there, not only an Opportunity of knowing ourſelves, but a certain Rule and Model, whereby to amend ourſelves. They, who will not look into this Glaſs, are not ſo much as Hearers: They who look careleſsly, and ſtraightway forget their Form, are the Hearers, without right Application, and that Practice which would certainly follow thereupon. For this is a Glaſs that flatters none, who are content to hold it fairly, and take the Report it gives. A Glaſs, that, Men are ſenſible enough, ought not to be held in vain. But then they are more entertained with the Reflections of other People's Viſages, than their own. You ſhall have them very acute in diſcovering Blemiſhes and Imperfections, and recommending this Correction upon their Account; ingenious and ready to apply every ſmart Thing they read, every Sermon they hear, to their Neighbours, and wonderfully pleaſed to think, how ſuch a one's Picture hath been drawn to the Life: But in all this they can find no Likeneſs of, no Concern for, any Fault or Failing in the proper Place. Hence it is, I mentioned a right Application of the Word. For this Glaſs is intended to ſhew, not others to us, but every

Man

Man to himſelf: To inform us what we are, in order to make us what we ſhould be; not to divert us with the Spots and Deformities of our Brethren. For this would prove the certain Way to keep us, nay, and to render us yet a great deal more, what we ſhould not be. Such falſe Appliers and Cenſurers are always too buſy abroad, not to overlook that at Home, which, of all the reſt, ſtands in moſt Need of being nicely looked into. And, whoever they be, that turn this Glaſs another Way, caſting off all the Diſcoveries made by it from themſelves, and becoming Judges of their Brother's Liberty and Conſcience; They are the very Hypocrites reproved by our Lord, for employing themſelves about the Mote in another's Eye, without regarding the Beam in their own. And how *religious* ſoever they may *ſeem*, depend upon it, all their *Religion is vain.*

And ſo is theirs likewiſe who reduce the Chriſtian Religion to a mere Science, and place all Perfection in reading, and hearing, and knowing the Precepts of it: Who meaſure their Proficiency by the Number of Sermons they run about to attend, or the good Books they are eager to peruſe: Or by the Niceneſs of the Points they are able to argue upon. As if the Word had done its Buſineſs by filling the Head, tho' it never influence the Heart at all. A ſort of Underſtanding this, to which even Ignorance itſelf, when honeſt and unaffected, is infinitely preferable. For ſo our Lord himſelf pronounced, *That Servant, which knew his Maſter's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes: But he that knew not,* (that is, was not in a Capacity of knowing) *and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, ſhall be beaten with few Stripes.* Alas! It is Action only, that crowns all our Studies. The Word is of equal Service and Neceſſity, for quickening and exciting us to what we already do, as for inſtructing us in what we do not yet underſtand. Luke xii. 47, 48.

It is not ſaid, *Happy are ye if ye know theſe Things*; but, *If ye know theſe Things, happy are ye, if ye do them.* In ſhort, to be wiſe in Spiritual Matters is no farther an Advantage, than as it diſpoſes us to be good; For that alone is being *wiſe unto Salvation.* And he, in the Chriſtian Senſe, knows moſt, who leads his Life beſt.

John xiii. 17.

So great Reaſon have all thoſe well-meaning People to be very jealous over their own Hearts, who uſe a very commendable Induſtry indeed, in learning the Precepts of this Law. So much it concerns them to examine, by the Marks laid down under my former Head, what Effect they feel upon their Temper and Behaviour. And whether, after ſo frequent, and ſo zealous, I had almoſt ſaid, ſuch infinite hearing, they be not like the Men of voracious Appetites, who eat much and greedily, but digeſt and thrive by nothing: For ſuch are ſometimes the keeneſt and devouteſt Hearers; deceived by the Quantity they take in, and ſtill *Hearers* only. And therefore ſo ſeaſonable and important is the Petition of our Church this Day;

Collect.

That *He, from whom all good Things do come,* would *grant us, not only by his holy Inſpiration to think thoſe Things that be good, but by his merciful Guiding to perform the ſame, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen.

The Fifth Sunday after EASTER.

The GOSPEL.

St. John xvi. 23.

23. *VERILY, verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*

PARAPHRASE.

23. After my Aſcent into Heaven, the moſt prevailing Motive you can uſe in your Prayers to God, will be to aſk for my Sake.

24. *Hitherto ye have aſked Nothing in my Name; aſk and ye ſhall receive, that your Joy may be full.*

24. This is yet a new Form; but in the Virtue of it you ſhall obtain whatſoever is good for you.

25. *These Things have I spoken unto you in Proverbs; the Time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in Proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.*

25. Some Difficulties my Discourses may have had, but the Time is at hand when you shall (by the Help of the Holy Spirit whom I will send) have a clear and perfect Understanding of the Will of God.

26. *In that Day ye shall ask in my Name, and I say unto you, that I will pray to the Father for you.*

27. *For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed, that I came out from God.*

28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World; again, I leave the World, and go to the Father.*

29. *His Disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no Proverb.*

30. *Now are we sure that thou knowest all Things, and needest not that any Man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.*

30. This convinces us, that thou art both able and willing to instruct Men in all necessary Truth, freely and of thy own Accord.

31. *Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?*

32. *Behold the Hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every Man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

31, 32. Alas, this Faith of yours is not so firm as you think it; there is a terrible Shock coming this very Night, which not one of you will be able to sustain; but all will forsake me and shift for themselves. And yet I shall not be forsaken, for God will stand by me, and assert my Truth and Innocence.

33. *These Things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have Peace; In the World ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.*

33. The Design of every Part of this Discourse is to strengthen your Dependence upon me, and to support you under the Afflictions and Persecutions you are about to endure, by this Reflection, that I have endured and conquered them before you.

COMMENT.

OF Several Particulars in this Goſpel, worthy our Conſideration, the Reader will find an Account in ſome other Parts of this Work. Such are, The * Command, the Efficacy, and the Duty, of praying in the Name of Chriſt: The † Clearneſs of that Knowledge, which the Diſciples ſhould receive, when enlightened by the Holy Ghoſt: And the Nature of that ‡ Peace in God and Chriſt, which Good Men enjoy, and which, our bleſſed Saviour declares, it was his Intent, by this whole Diſcourſe, to promote and ſecure to his Diſciples. That Therefore, which I chooſe at preſent to inſiſt upon, is the very Cloſe of all, in thoſe Words, *In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* Ver. 33.

* *Goſp. for* St. Phil. *and* Jam.

† Whit-ſund. *Goſp.*

‡ *Ep.* 4 *S. in* Adv.

Upon this Occaſion I ſhall enquire, *Firſt*, What is meant by *being of good Cheer*; And *Secondly*, How the Conſideration of Chriſt having *overcome the World*, is of Service to cheer his Followers, under any *Tribulation*, which they ſhall *have in it*.

I. As to the former of theſe, I take it to be ſufficiently explained, by the *Three* following Remarks.

1. The being of *good Cheer* under *Tribulation* does by no means infer that Firmneſs of Mind, (as ſome Philoſophers of old miſcalled it) which preſerves the Man from being at all affected with Calamities, or moved from his uſual Eaſineſs of Temper. How far Human Nature might be beholden to them, who beſtowed this fanciful Perfection upon it, is not worth ſtaying to examine: Let it ſuffice to obſerve, that Religion is not at all obliged by it. For the Goſpel no where goes about to delude us with romantick Notions: It tells no Man upon a Croſs, or in a Fire, that he feels no Pain;

Pain; or that ſuch Pain is nothing to him, becauſe it cannot reach his Soul: And yet, it commands every Man to continue ſtedfaſt in his Duty, notwithſtanding the moſt exquiſite Tortures to deter him from it. It is entirely ſuited to the Condition and Common Senſe of Mankind; and would not require more Conſtancy in ſuffering, if it did not furniſh more ſubſtantial Comforts, than any other Syſtem in the World. In ſhort, Chriſtianity leaves Nature, and its Paſſions, in the proper Exerciſe of their Powers; offers no falſe Ideas of Things without us, which Experience will be ſure to prove falſe, when we moſt need and wiſh to find them true: But it allows the tendereſt Senſe of Pain and Grief, and yet contrives a Way to conquer that Senſe, and ſuſtain our Spirits under the utmoſt Weight of them.

2. This Command to be of *good Cheer* belongs to ſuch *Tribulation* only, as the Hand of God brings upon us. The Sufferings of theſe Diſciples, in propagating the Faith, ſeem to have been principally in our Lord's View at this Time. And for theſe he had long ſince declared them *Bleſſed*. But he had alſo directed them to join the *Wiſdom of the Serpent, with the Harmleſneſs of the Dove*; and made Prudence, as well as Perſeverance in Goodneſs, a truly Chriſtian Duty. When therefore Men court Danger, and draw upon themſelves unneceſſary Sufferings; it is not the beſt Cauſe nor the beſt Meaning in the World, that will bear ſuch People out, or intitle them to the Comforts of perſecuted Chriſtians. For theſe in truth do ſuffer, not for Chriſt's and Righteouſneſs Sake, but for their own Humour and Folly, the Enthuſiaſm of a miſtaken, or the Heat of an indiſcreet, Zeal.

Mat. v. 10, 11, 12. —x. 16.

The Want of diſtinguiſhing rightly in Matters of this Kind gives riſe to many Miſtakes, of very ill Conſequence in the World. It diſpoſes inconſiderate People to diſlike, and furniſhes thoſe, that affect to be

popular, with an Occaſion to cenſure too ſeverely their Laws and Governors, when inflicting Puniſhments upon Men of differing Perſuaſions, for Conſiderations purely Civil. And it blows up the Perſons ſo puniſhed, with falſe Notions of their own Condition; as if all the Conſolations and Crowns, promiſed to them that are Martyrs indeed, were now their Due. And yet their Sufferings in Truth are ſuch, as, when Matters are rightly ſtated, the Cauſe of Religion hath no Part or Concern in it at all. What thoſe Calamities are, which it is the Will of God we ſhould ſuffer, I have formerly endeavoured to help Men in diſcovering *. Under theſe we have Reaſon to be of good Cheer. But, when we go out of the Way of his Providence, and, not content *with taking up our Croſs*, are fond of *making* it; we are thenceforth deſtitute of the true ſpiritual Support. Let us not therefore think our Maſter worſe than his Word, if we find ourſelves extremely diſconſolate and oppreſſed under our needleſs Hardſhips, or voluntary, and even laboured Sorrows. But,

* *Goſp. for* 5 *S. in* Lent.

3. Though by *being of good Cheer when we have Tribulation* be not meant, either that we ſhould be inſenſible, or that we ſhould be fond of it; Yet thus much certainly is meant; that neither the Sharpneſs of any Affliction we feel, nor the Terror of any we fear, ſhould ſo far vanquiſh our Reaſon and Religion, as to drive us upon unlawful Methods, for declining the one, or delivering ourſelves from the other. We are to ſatisfy ourſelves in the Juſtice, the Wiſdom, the Goodneſs of him, who orders all our Events to us: To entertain them all with Meekneſs and much Patience: To bring our Will into Subjection to the Divine Will: To rejoice in the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and preſerve this at any rate, though with the Hazard, nay the certain Loſs of all our worldly Advantages. And to ſet the Supports and the Rewards of perſecuted Truth, or afflicted Piety,

in

in Oppoſition to all the Diſcouragements and Preſſures from abroad, and all the Frailties of feeble, and too yielding, Fleſh and Blood at Home: This is the *good Cheer* our Lord requires, and hath himſelf contributed to, *by overcoming the World.* A Conſideration, which, I ſhall now proceed to ſhew, in the

II. *Second* place, is of great Service to all his Followers under *Tribulation.* The Force of this Argument will beſt appear, by obſerving, *Firſt*, how it is that Chriſt overcame *the World*; *And then*, which Way that Victory of His redounds to our Advantage.

By the *World*, in this Paſſage, we are no Doubt to underſtand the Evil of the World, the Wickedneſs, the Malice, the Temptations, the Troubles, all in it that we have Reaſon to fear and flee from, for the Sake of our Safety, or our Happineſs, in this and the next Life.

Now the Wickedneſs of the World Chriſt hath overcome, by expiating the Sins of Mankind in the Sacrifice of Himſelf upon the Croſs: By the powerful Aſſiſtances of his Grace, enabling all the Faithful to conquer the Paſſions of corrupt Nature; by thus looſing the Bands, and releaſing the Captives of Hell, and *breaking* that Old *Serpent*'s Head, whoſe Attempts againſt Him were ſo very vain, as only to *bruiſe his Heel.* Gen. iii. 15.

The Malice of the World he overcame, by diſappointing the Deſigns of the Devil and his wicked Inſtruments, againſt himſelf and his Goſpel: Making his own Sufferings fatal to the Contrivers, and ſaving to all penitent Believers; and eſpecially, by the irreſiſtible Evidence of Truth, ſubduing the Spight and the Cruelty, the Calumny and Cunning, of the Enemies of every Sort, who by all manner of Means conſpired to ſuppreſs and extirpate his Religion, and as many as ſhould dare to preach, or to profeſs it.

The Temptations of the World he overcame, by all that ſevere but ſtill ſocial Virtue, and heavenly Piety,

Piety, which ſhone ſo bright in all his Converſation. And the Troubles of it, by ſubmitting to Hunger and Thirſt, to Poverty and Grief, to live like the meaneſt, and to be treated like the worſt, of Men. Nay even Death itſelf, our laſt and grimmeſt Enemy, hath he overcome, *Taken from this ſtrong Man the Armour wherein he truſted, and divided his Spoils.* To ſo total a Rout hath he put his Adverſaries, and ours. And the Benefit from ſuch noble Atchievements, which accrues to us, will ſoon appear, after having thus ſeen the Nature of his Victory; what Foes they were he fought, and how he conquered them.

1. *Firſt*, then, This Conqueſt is of great Advantage to *cheer* our Spirits in *Tribulation*, as it gives us the Comfort and Encouragement of our bleſſed Saviour's Example. When Men feel themſelves hard preſſed, and are ready to ſink under their Burthen; Cowardice and Sloth are apt to take Sanctuary in the Greatneſs of their Trials, and in the Weakneſs of Human Nature to encounter with them. Now our Lord, in making himſelf a Pattern of ſuffering Evil, no leſs than of doing Good, hath beat us off from this too common Pretence. For he hath condeſcended to bear all the inſeparable Infirmities of Human Nature. And he hath done and ſuffered ſo much in this Nature, as plainly proves, that the Reſt who partake of it, are capable of diſcharging their Part; provided they would be reſolute and ſincere, in doing all that, which Human Nature, aſſiſted by Grace, is really qualified for. Hence the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* makes ſo frequent mention of Chriſt being in all Points *like unto us*, with reſpect to the Frailties of this mortal State: And when exhorting Chriſtians to *reſiſt unto Blood, ſtriving againſt Sin*, he directs them to *look unto Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, and to conſider him that endured ſuch Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf, leſt they ſhould be wearied and faint in their Minds.*

Heb. xii. 2—4.

2. *Secondly*,

2. *Secondly*, The Victory obtained by Chriſt over the World is a mighty Support to all his Followers, if we conſider the Deſign of it, and in what Capacity it was, that he won the Day. The Virtues of every Good Man are Copies to write after. But there is one Peculiarity in the Example of Chriſt, which that of no other Perſon hath, or can have. It is, that the Actions and Sufferings of all beſides were their own Duty, and tended to their own Advantage: Whereas his, have nothing private in them, but all are publick, and of general Influence. He was the common Repreſentative of us all, and as he was born, and lived, and died; ſo did he riſe again, and triumph, and aſcend into Heaven, for the Sake and Benefit of Mankind. He fought the bloody Field for us, and he conquered for us too. As his Puniſhment of Right was ours, and his Sufferings ours; So his Releaſe, his Deliverance, and his Glory are ours alſo. And ſure there is Reaſon good, why his Victory ſhould *cheer* us; when our Rights and Intereſts are ſo interwoven with his, as to convey to us a Share and Claim in all his Undertakings, and all his Succeſſes.

3. *Thirdly*, A farther Encouragement ariſing from hence depends upon the Manner of our Lord's *overcoming the World.* Now this was not done by preventing, or eſcaping, but by enduring, the Tribulation of it. His Followers therefore have no Reaſon to take it amiſs, if they be *conformed to the Likeneſs of his Sufferings*, and are led on to Conqueſt, by the ſame painful Steps of Patience and Perſeverance. For as the Exaltation of *the Man Chriſt Jeſus* receives Luſtre from the Ignominy and Torture of his Death: So by making Tribulation the Lot of his Diſciples, he hath added to their Virtue and their Honour. The Aſſiſtance of his Grace to carry them through their Difficulties, turns to better Account, and is more for the Credit of Religion and its Proſelytes, than the keeping them clear of all Difficulties could poſſibly have been.

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This might have left their Virtue liable to Suſpicion; but that tries, and diſtinguiſhes, and publiſhes it to the World.

Thus I have ſhewed, what Supports we are provided with, in the *Fight of Afflictions* appointed for us. A Fight, which leads to certain Victory, unleſs we be treacherous to ourſelves. Courage then, my Brethren and Fellow-Soldiers in *Jeſus*; *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the Faith, quit you like Men, be ſtrong*. Enter the Liſts boldly, and remember who brings you on. Your Captain himſelf was made perfect through Sufferings: Let his Example therefore provoke you to do gallantly. He is Daily and Hourly pouring in unſeen Recruits from Above; fear not then, neither be diſmayed; for more and mightier are they that be for us, than all that are, or can be, againſt us. Nay, which is more, He is not only your Leader, but your victorious and triumphant Leader. You march againſt a baffled Adverſary, and ſhould therefore act, like Men full of glorious Hopes and great Aſſurance. Do but dare to reſiſt, and the Enemy will flee from you. He knows our Force through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us, and remembers his paſt Defeat, and feels his own Weakneſs.

1 Cor. xvi. 13.

But why do I encourage you to fight, when, properly ſpeaking, the Battle is over? All you have left to do, is to purſue, and puſh your own Advantage, to reap and wear the Laurels, which another Hand hath won. For, as our Lord did here declare, that *He* had *overcome the World* already, though the great Conflict of his bitter Paſſion was not yet over, becauſe he knew perfectly well, what the Iſſue of that Conflict would be: So may every faithful Servant of his be truly ſaid to have overcome the World, as having done it with and in that Saviour, who fought and conquered, not for himſelf, but them. To whom therefore with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour and Glory, Thankſgiving and Praiſe, for ever and ever. *Amen*.

The ASCENSION DAY.

The COLLECT.

GRANT, we beſeech thee Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only begotten Son our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to have aſcended into the Heavens: So we may alſo in Heart and Mind thither aſcend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, one God, World without End. *Amen.*

Acts i. *Mark* xvi. *Col.* iii. 1, 2, *&c.*

The EPISTLE.

Acts i. 1.

PARAPHRASE.

1. *THE former Treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach,*

2. *Until the Day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghoſt, had given Commandments unto the Apoſtles, whom he had choſen.*

3. *To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his Paſſion, by many infallible Proofs, being ſeen of them forty Days, and ſpeaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God:*

4. *And being aſſembled together with them, commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the Promiſe of the Father which (ſaith he) ye have heard of me.*

4. Converſing with them frequently, during the Interval between his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion.

5. *For John truly baptized with Water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many Days hence.*

5. *John*'s Baptiſm was with Water only; but in ten Days Time ye ſhall be conſecrated to my Service, by the plentiful Shedding of the Holy Ghoſt upon you.

6. *When they therefore were come together, they aſked of him, ſaying, Lord, wilt thou at this Time reſtore again the Kingdom to Iſrael?*

6. Shall the *Jews* be gathered from their Diſperſion and Captivity, and now again bear Rule, as they expect to do, by the Meſſiah's Means?

7. *And*

7. *And he ſaid unto them, It is not for you to know the Times or the Seaſons, which the Father hath put in his own Power.*

8. *But ye ſhall receive Power, after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you. And ye ſhall be Witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth,*

9. *And when he had ſpoken theſe Things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their Sight.*

10. Two Angels in the Form of Men,—

10. *And while they looked ſtedfaſtly toward Heaven, as he went up, behold, two Men ſtood by them in white Apparel;*

11. You look in vain after one who is not now to be ſeen; but he ſhall be ſeen again at the End of the World, coming then to Judgment, as he now went from hence, in a bright Cloud.

11. *Which alſo ſaid, Ye Men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into Heaven? This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like Manner, as ye have ſeen him go into Heaven.*

The ASCENSION DAY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

St. Mark xvi. 14.

14. *JESUS appeared unto the Eleven, as they ſat at Meat, and upbraided them with their Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen.*

15. Let the Goſpel not be confined, as the Law was, to *Judea*, but let all Nations partake of it.

15. *And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the World, and preach the Goſpel unto every Creature.*

16. He that believes and ſolemnly profeſſes that Faith in Baptiſm, ſhall, by Virtue of the Covenant there made and continued in, be ſaved: And he that believes, and would, but cannot be ſo baptized, his Caſe is the ſame: But he that wilfully and contemptuouſly refuſes that Faith, ſhall be damned.

16. *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.*

17. *And*

17. *And these Signs shall follow them that believe: In my Name shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak with new Tongues.*

18. *They shall take up Serpents, and if they drink any deadly Thing it shall not hurt them: They shall lay Hands on the Sick, and they shall recover.*

19. *So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into Heaven; and sat on the right Hand of God.*

20. *And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following.*

COMMENT.

THE Portion of Scripture for the *Epistle*, and that of the *Gospel*, for this great and solemn Day, do both agree in acquainting us, how our Lord employed his last Minutes with his Disciples here upon Earth; and how his blessed Person was disposed of, when ceasing to converse any longer among Men. They relate, that, by a Fate very distant from that of common Men, his Body was not deposited in the Grave, whose Gates and strong Holds he, at his Resurrection, had already broken through; but that it was received up on High, and conveyed into Heaven. Thus far both Passages agree, and then St. *Mark* adds, that he *sat on the right Hand of God.*

These two glorious Actions make the Sixth Article of our Creed. Each of which I shall first explain, and then make some Reflexions, proper for the Occasion of this Festival.

I. In order to understand the Former of these Actions, we shall do well to observe,

1. That, when our Lord is affirmed to have been *received into Heaven*, This must be understood of his Human Nature only. For the Divine Nature fills all Places both in Heaven and Earth, and, being incapable of that which we properly call Local Motion, it

does this at all Times too. Hence in his Converſation with *Nicodemus*, our Lord very emphatically ſtiles himſelf, *The Son of Man which is in Heaven.* Now, ſince the Scriptures treating of this Matter, do manifeſtly mean, that *Jeſus* ceaſed to be in the Place, where he was before, and began to be in a Place where he was not before; that he remained no longer upon Earth, as he had for ſome Time been; but removed into Heaven, where he had never been, as he hath ſince that Time been: It follows, that theſe Paſſages cannot be underſtood of that Nature in Chriſt, which is infinite and omnipreſent; but of that which is finite, and may be ſo in one Place, as not to continue in another. That is, of his Human Nature, and of this only.

2. The Human Nature conſiſts in the Union of Soul and Body, and with theſe the Divine Nature of Chriſt is ſo joined, as to make one Perſon. Hence it appears, that not only the Human Soul went up into Heaven, by holy and elevated Thoughts; but, that the ſame Body of Chriſt, which was born, and ſuffered, and died, was actually carried up thither. And ſo our Saviour's Aſcenſion was no imaginary or figurative, but a real, proper, and corporal Aſcent into Heaven.

3. Concerning the Place whither he is gone, much need not be ſaid. For, though the Word *Heaven* is uſed in different Senſes, and the Place diſtinguiſhed into different Regions; yet we can be under no reaſonable Doubt, whether, upon this Occaſion, we are not to interpret it, of the Loftieſt and moſt glorious of all thoſe Regions. The Scriptures declare expreſsly, that Chriſt is *paſſed through the Heavens*, that he is *made higher than the Heavens*, and that he *aſcended up far above all Heavens*. Conſequently, that his Human Nature is *received up into Heaven*, in the moſt elevated Part, and nobleſt

Pſal. lxviii. 4.
2 Cor. xii. 2.
Deut. x. 14.
Pſal. viii.
—cxlviii. 4.

Heb. iv. 14.
—vii. 26.
Epheſ. iv. 10.

noblest Signification, that this Word at any Time does, or can possibly, admit.

But that is not all. So great a Degree of Honour and Felicity is vouchsafed to the blessed Angels, that *they always behold the Face* of Christ's *Father which is in Heaven.* Notwithstanding which, the Author to the *Hebrews* observes, that God never said to any of those glorious Spirits, *Sit thou on my Right Hand.* This is a Pre-eminence reserved for the Son only, and That which comes now, in the

Matt. xviii. 10.

Heb. i. 13.

II. *Second* Place to be considered. Now the Expression of *sitting on God's Right Hand*, is one of those, wherein the Holy Ghost condescends to our Capacities, by attributing to God the Parts and Gestures of a Human Body. The Hand is the chief Instrument of exerting our Strength; and therefore often used to denote the Power of God. The Right Hand is the usual Place of Honour and Respect; and therefore this denotes the highest Dignity. And, as the most honourable upon Earth are distinguished, by the nearest Approach to the Person of the King: So it was the Ambition of the two Sons of *Zebedee*, *to sit the one on Christ's Right Hand, and the other on his Left, in his Kingdom.*

Matt. xx. 21, 23.

In like Manner by *Sitting*, is not, in the Case before us, strictly intended any Posture of the Body, but the Things usually implied by that Posture. Thus the Prophet intimates the profound Ease and fearless Tranquillity of his People, by promising, that they should *sit every Man under his own Vine.* And thus the Saviour of the World may be said to *sit down* on the Right Hand of God; as he now hath ceased from the Labours and Sufferings, undergone *in the Days of his Flesh*; and enjoys perfect Repose, and Happiness, with his Father in Heaven.

Mic. iv. 4.

Heb. v. 7.

Sitting again implies Continuance in the ſame Place. From hence the Tribes, whoſe Lot fell out there, in the Diviſion of the promiſed Land, are ſaid *to ſit by the Sea-ſhore*. And thus our Saviour's *ſitting* on the Right Hand of God denotes his conſtant Abode in thoſe Regions of Bliſs and Glory: Which agrees with St. *Peter*'s Declaration to the *Jews*, that *the Heavens muſt receive Jeſus Chriſt, until the Times of Reſtitution*, or final Conſummation, *of all Things*.

Judges v. 17.

Acts iii. 21.

Sitting, once more, imports Authority and Dominion. Hence Kings are repreſented in this Poſture upon their Thrones, and Magiſtrates uſe it in Courts of Juſtice. And thus Chriſt is deſcribed *ſitting* on the Right Hand of God, to intimate that mediatory Kingdom, and univerſal Power, which, as God-man, he is now inveſted with. Hither we muſt refer thoſe magnificent Accounts, given by our Lord himſelf. That to the High-Prieſt: *Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the Right Hand of Power*; and that to his Diſciples, in this Day of his Inauguration, *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth*. Thoſe alſo by St. *Paul*, when he acquaints the *Corinthians*, that *He muſt reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet*; and the *Epheſians*, that *God hath ſet Chriſt at his own Right Hand in the heavenly Places: Far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come: And hath put all Things under his Feet, and gave him to be the Head over all Things to the Church*. Thus laſtly, St. *Peter* affirms, that *Jeſus Chriſt is gone into Heaven, and is on the Right Hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made ſubject unto him*.

Matt. xxvi. 64.

—xxviii. 18.

1 Cor. xv. 25.
Eph. i. 20, 21, 22.

1 Pet. iii. 22.

Thus much, I conceive, may ſuffice, for eſtabliſhing a right Notion of that Article of our Chriſtian Faith, contained in the Scriptures, appointed for this

Day.

Day. The Sum whereof will be comprehended in theſe very few Words: "That the ſame Bliſs, and "Glory, and Power, which the Son of God did, be-"fore his Incarnation, enjoy with his Father from all "Eternity, his Human Nature is now made Partaker "of in the higheſt Heavens. That this God Man "is inveſted with an abſolute Authority and bound-"leſs Dominion; and does now, in both Natures "rule, as he ſhall one Day judge, the whole World. "That, till that Day come, it is the Duty of us, and "of all Mankind, to reverence and obey, to truſt in "and pray to him, as our only Head and King, our "rightful and univerſal Lord." This is the Subſtance of that, which we are to underſtand, by *Jeſus Chriſt being received up into Heaven, and ſitting at the Right Hand of God.*

II. I proceed now, in the *Second* Place, to lay down ſome Reflections and Uſes, proper to be made by every Chriſtian, from the Doctrine thus explained.

1. And *Firſt*, Our Saviour's Aſcent into Heaven adminiſters unſpeakable Comfort, and great Degrees of Confidence, with regard to the Capacity, in which he aſcended thither.

The Author to the *Hebrews* takes Notice, that this Action of our Lord was typified under the Old Law, by the High-Prieſt entering into the Holy of Holies, on the Solemn Day of Atonement; whither alſo he brought in the Blood of the Sacrifice. Now this was done, not upon the High-Prieſt's Account alone; but in behalf of the whole Congregation, whoſe Repreſentative he then was, and for whoſe Benefit the Sin-offering had been ſlain. Thus alſo Chriſt, the Subſtance and Antitype of that ancient Figure, is *entered into Places not made with Hands*, even into *Heaven itſelf*, for this very Purpoſe (ſays the Apoſtle) *now to appear in the Preſence of God for us.* Hence we have leave to look on this Aſcent, not merely as a private and perſonal Advantage, but as

Heb. ix. 10. *See Epiſt. Wedn. and Friday before* Eaſter.

Heb. ix. 24.

performed under that publick Character, which Chriſt ſuſtained, in the Quality of our Great High-Prieſt. And, as the Sacrifice of his Death was accepted for the *Sins of many*; ſo the Repreſentation of that Sacrifice, at his Aſcenſion, does likewiſe affect, and extend to, as many as are purged and pardoned by it. He went up therefore before us, and he went up for us. From whence the ſame Apoſtle mentions, as an *Anchor of our Hope both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, that *Jeſus the Forerunner is entered for us within the Veil.* Now a *Forerunner* is a Relative Term, and of Neceſſity muſt have Regard to ſome Perſons following behind. A better Application whereof we cannot have, than that made by our Lord himſelf, when comforting his Diſciples for his Departure from them: *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions: I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myſelf; that where I am, there you may be alſo.*

Heb. vi. 19, 20.

John xiv. 2, 3.

2. Let us upon this Occaſion contemplate and admire the wonderful Wiſdom and Equity of God, in receiving the Human Nature of his Bleſſed Son to his Right Hand in Heaven. It is indeed a moſt glorious Privilege, for Fleſh and Blood to ſit in heavenly Places. But when we remember, that this was the Fleſh and Blood, which the Eternal Son of God condeſcended to honour with his perſonal Reſidence; that in this he laboured under all the Wants and Infirmities, the contumelious Treatment and bitter Agonies, which he ſubmitted to, but could not undergo, except as Man; we then may eaſily diſcern great Reaſon, for a Recompence as extraordinary, as the Sufferings had been; we cannot indeed ſuppoſe any Amends too much, for ſuch exquiſite Tortures, and barbarous Indignities. As no Sorrow was ever like his Sorrow; ſo was no Joy ever ſo full, no Honour ever ſo excellent. And to this Account we find St. *Paul* placing it, in his Second to

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the *Philippians*. Which Paſſage having formerly been handled at large, I forbear proſecuting the Argument of it now. *Epiſt. Sunday before* Eaſter.

Mean while, the Scandal of the Croſs was effectually removed, by ſeating the Body crucified upon the Throne on High, and conſtituting that once Mock-King the Lord and Judge of the whole Earth.

3. *Laſtly*, This Aſcent, and Seſſions of our bleſſed Maſter at God's Right Hand, do lay upon all his Followers the ſtrongeſt Obligation to be heavenly-minded. He is ſaid to have *endured*, in proſpect of *the Joy* to follow; and we, like him, ſhould keep our Eyes, as much as may be, fixed upon that Joy. For how ſhall we ever love, what we do not deſire? And how ſhall we deſire what we do not value? And how ſhall we learn to value what we never beſtow any Thought upon? Now the Glories of Heaven want no true Worth to recommend them: There only needs ſerious Meditation, to render them more familiar and preſent to our Minds. For, the better we grow acquainted with theſe Things, the more ardently we ſhall be ſure to love, and thirſt, and pant after them. Let us therefore remember, we are Chriſtians: That our Lord and Leader is gone far above out of our Sight; that we are ſtill able to follow him with the Eye of Faith; that our true Bleſſedneſs conſiſts in being with him; that our main Concern lies in another Country; and that the Affairs of this, in which we now ſojourn, are always in ſome Meaſure to employ our Pains, but by no Means to poſſeſs our Hearts. In ſhort, compleatly happy we cannot be, till we arrive at thoſe bliſsful Manſions, whither our Saviour Chriſt is gone before. But the neareſt Approach to Happineſs, poſſible to be made by us in the mean while, is *in Heart and Mind thither to aſcend, and with Him continually dwell.* Heb. xii. 2. *Collect.*

For this we muſt labour, for this we muſt implore the Aſſiſtance of his Grace: And O *Thou that ſitteſt*

at the Right Hand of God, have Mercy upon us: Thou that ſitteſt at the Right Hand of God, receive our Prayer. For thou only art Holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only, O Chriſt, with the Holy Ghoſt, art moſt high in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

Commun. Service.

Sunday after ASCENSION DAY.

The COLLECT.

Acts i. 9, 10. *Phil.* ii. 9, 10, 11.

O GOD the King of Glory, who haſt exalted thine only Son Jeſus Chriſt with great Triumph unto thy Kingdom in Heaven: We beſeech thee, leave us not comfortleſs; but ſend to us thy Holy Ghoſt to comfort us, and exalt us unto the ſame Place, whither our Saviour Chriſt is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the Holy Ghoſt, one God World without End. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

1 *St.* Peter iv. 7.

7. Compare St. *Luke* xxi. 34, 35, 36.

7. *THE End of all Things is at hand; be ye therefore ſober, and watch unto Prayer.*

8. Your Charity to others will incline the Mercy of God, and be a Means to procure the Pardon of your own Sins from Him: Or it will paſs over many Sins in others, and ſo preſerve Peace and Kindneſs among you.

8. *And above all Things have fervent Charity among yourſelves; for Charity ſhall cover the Multitude of Sins.*

9. *Uſe Hoſpitality one to another without grudging.*

10. *As every Man hath received the Gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God.*

11. *If any Man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God: If any Man miniſter, let him do it as of the Ability which God giveth; that God in all Things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Praiſe and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

COMMENT.

BY the *End of all Things*, mentioned at the *Seventh* Verſe, we ſhall do well to underſtand that Day of the Lord, whoſe Terrors are deſcribed in the xxivth of St. *Matthew*, and the xxiſt of St. *Luke*: Both which Scriptures have been already conſidered in the Courſe of this Work. *Goſ.* 2 S. *in* Adv. 6 S. *after* Epiph.

A Revolution of that infinite Conſequence, that the utmoſt Preparation, poſſible to be made for it, is all little enough. And a Revolution ſo uncertain, as to the Time when it ſhall overtake us; that our Lord, upon all Occaſions taken to mention it, inculcates the great Duty of Watchfulneſs. A Duty, incapable of being diſcharged by any, who have not attained to a Maſtery over their ſenſual Appetites; the indulging whereof to any Degree of Exceſs, clouds the Reaſon that it cannot keep awake; and indiſpoſes the Mind to every Thing ſerious, that it hath no Inclination to conſider, and provide itſelf againſt, the Surprizes of its ſpiritual Enemy. His Temptations can at no Time attack us with more fatal Advantage, than when unlawful Liberties and Pleaſures have put us off our Guard: And, if this be our Danger in every common Event of Life, how much more dreadful is it, with regard to our End, in which whatever we ſuffer is final, and incapable of any Reparation? Moſt ſeaſonably therefore does the Apoſtle here preſs the Duty of Sobriety. And, in regard the Strength and Succour of the very beſt Men is not from themſelves, moſt reaſonably does he add *Watching unto Prayer*. Thus treading in the Steps of our bleſſed Saviour, who, on the like Occaſion, gives the following Warning. *Take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any Time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and Cares of this Life, and ſo that Day come upon you unawares. For as a Snare* Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36.

ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the Face of the whole Earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all thoſe Things, that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man. The only Remarks I would leave this Particular with, are, (1.) That, by comparing our Lord and St. *Peter* together, it appears, that Sobriety means, not only what we call a temperate Uſe of Meats, and Drinks, and Pleaſures, and Recreations, and the like; but alſo a moderating our Deſires, and Purſuits, in the Buſineſs and Advantages of the World. And (2.) That there is a mutual Subſerviency of theſe Virtues to each other: Sobriety is neceſſary to qualify a Man for Devotion; and Prayer as uſeful, to preſerve and confirm us in the Love of Sobriety.

At the 8th Verſe, he does not only recommend Charity in a very extraordinary Degree; but enforces his Exhortation with an Argument, exceeding proper, in whether ſoever of theſe two Conſtructions we take it, which I have expreſſed, in my Paraphraſe of thoſe Words. The Power of this Argument, in the former Senſe, will make the Subject of a Diſcourſe hereafter. That of the latter is explained in St. *Paul*'s Character of Charity, appointed for the Epiſtle on *Quinquageſima* Sunday.

Geſ. for 22 *S. after* Trinity.

The Duties that follow, to the End of this Epiſtle; the Reaſon obliging to them, at the 10th, and the End or View they ought to be directed to, at the 11th Verſe, have had their due Enlargement heretofore. Particularly, upon the Epiſtles, for the *Third* Sunday in *Advent*, and the *Second* after *Epiphany*.

The Sunday after ASCENSION DAY.

The GOSPEL.

St. John xv. 26. *and Part of C.* xvi. PARAPHRASE.

26. *WHen the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me.*

26. When that Spirit who is to diſcharge the Office of a Paraclete, who is a Spirit of Truth, ſent by me, and ſent from the Father: When He, I ſay, ſhall come, as very ſhortly he will, the miraculous Gifts and Graces he ſhall endue you with, will be a glorious Teſtimony of my Innocence and Doctrine.

27. *And ye alſo ſhall bear Witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the Beginning.*

27. To that Teſtimony of His, you ſhall add your own; becauſe, converſing with me ever ſince I entered on my prophetick Office, your Knowledge of all my Actions and Sufferings renders you competent and unexceptionable Witneſſes in this Cauſe.

xvi. 1. *THeſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended.*

xvi. 1. Theſe Sufferings I forewarned you of, and theſe Comforts I have promiſed, to prevent your falling away from your Profeſſion, by either the Surpriſe or the Extremity of any Affliction that may befal you.

2. *They ſhall put you out of the Synagogues; yea the Time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God Service.*

2. The Jews ſhall caſt you out of their Communion; and Jews and Gentiles both ſhall be tranſported with ſo fierce a Zeal, as to think the ſhedding your Blood an Act of Merit, a Sacrifice acceptable to God.

3. *And theſe Things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me.*

3. But all this Cruelty is the Effect of their Blindneſs, and of their not being ſenſible, how contrary ſuch Bitterneſs is to the Mind of God, and the Temper of my Goſpel.

4. *But theſe Things have I told you, that when the Time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.*

4. When thus it happens, the Events will convince you of my Truth, in foretelling your Sufferings; and they ought by the ſame Reaſon, to ſupport you with a Belief, that the Comforts and Rewards promiſed at the ſame Time, ſhall be found equally true.

COMMENT.

THE Goſpel for this Day is a ſeaſonable Introduction to the Feſtival now approaching, as it ſuggeſts ſundry Obſervations ſeaſonable for that Occaſion. The reſt of theſe I ſhall reſerve for that Solemnity; and at preſent will inſiſt only on the Office of the Holy Ghoſt, ſet forth under the Notion of *Paraclete*, which we render *Comforter*. Now this, in the due Extent of the Original, implies *Three* Things; all exceeding proper for the Circumſtances of the Diſciples at that Time.

That good Office is here intimated, as I ſaid, in the Title of *Comforter*. A Tranſlation, which ſeems to have been choſen, chiefly in regard of thoſe inward Conſolations, which the Diſciples appear plainly to have found, in the very ſharpeſt of their Troubles, by the Acceſſion of this bleſſed Spirit. Or elſe it might reſpect an old Uſage of the Word, which ſtill remains in Forms of Law, where by *comforting* is underſtood any Sort of abetting, ſtrengthening, upholding, ſtanding by, and taking Part with, another. Thus it will anſwer the Extent of the Word *Paraclete*. Which is a Term that hath Relation to Courts and Proceedings at Law; and will deſerve a little of our Attention, for getting Light into the Paſſages, where Chriſt promiſed to ſend the Holy Spirit, in this Capacity.

1. Now *Firſt*, The Senſe of *Comforter*, according to its modern and moſt obvious Acceptation, imports, no doubt, one very conſiderable Branch of the Holy Spirit's Office. Such, as the preſent Circumſtances of thoſe Diſciples did, to be ſure, ſtand in very great Need of. They were left deſtitute of their Maſter's Converſation; not only ſo, but they were left now the Marks of all that Hatred and Malice, which hitherto had fallen upon him. They were commanded to expect great Variety of Sufferings, and unrelenting Barbarity,

Barbarity, on all Hands. And ſure this State called for ſome more than ordinary Powers, to ſuſtain and confirm their Hearts under it, and reconcile them to the certain Hardſhips, which their Duty and Character would daily expoſe them to. Now this was to be done, by ſupplying them with heavenly and unſeen Succours; By thoſe Recruits overpowering the Temptations, which threatened their overthrow; By re-inforcing a Nature, otherwiſe too weak and frail to ſtand the Shock of ſo much Terror and Danger, ſo continual Sorrow, and mercileſs Perſecution. In all theſe Regards the Holy Ghoſt exerted his Divine Influences, and did really approve himſelf in the moſt eminent manner, and moſt literal Senſe, a *Comforter*.

2. The Word *Paraclete* does alſo denote an *Interceſſor*. And of this *Spirit* St. *Paul* ſays, that *he maketh Interceſſion for the Saints, with Groanings, which cannot be uttered, and according to the Will of God.* This ſome underſtand of his Perſonal Mediation before the Throne of Heaven, by virtue whereof our Prayers are rendred acceptable: Others, of thoſe Graces, by which he prepares and diſpoſes the Hearts of good Men to pray, in ſuch a Manner, with a Zeal ſo fervent, with a Will ſo reſigned to the Providence and Wiſdom of God, as never fails of Acceptance and Succeſs. Either Way, the Title of *Paraclete* belongs to him. For it was then a cuſtomary Part of the Advocate's Duty, to draw up the Petitions and Repreſentations of his Clients to prefer them in Court, to uſe his Intereſt on their Behalf, and, with great Induſtry, to recommend Them, and their Cauſe, to Perſons of Authority and Power. Rom. viii. 26, 27.

The Sum then of the *Paraclete*'s Buſineſs, in this *Second Notion*, was, to procure Favour and Acceſs for thoſe, who had not the Advantages of making their own Way. And thus We, of our ſelves moſt unworthy and vile, ſtand in Need of the Mediation of our Saviour and his Bleſſed Spirit to preſent our Peti-

tions, and give us Countenance in our Approaches, to the Majeſty on high. 'Tis this Appearance on our Behalf, that muſt juſtify our Addreſſes, and render That a Throne of Grace and Love, of Gentleneſs and Pity, of Clemency and Condeſcenſion. For otherwiſe it would be inacceſſible; a Seat of Judgment and ſtern Juſtice. A Place, at which no Man's Application could find favourable Entertainment; becauſe, if God ſhould be *extreme to mark what is done amiſs* by the very beſt of Men, no Fleſh living could *be juſtified in his Sight*. So neceſſary was it even for the Apoſtles, So much more neceſſary is it for Us, miſerable Sinners, to enjoy the Benefits and kind Offices of this heavenly *Paraclete*; according to the *Second* Notion of that Title, as it denotes an Interceſſor.

Pſal. cxxx. 3. —— cxliii. 2.

3. There is yet a *Third*, and very Conſiderable one, employed in aſſiſting Clients in the Pleading of their Cauſe. And this, not by arguing the whole Point for them, (as with us is now moſt uſual) but by inſtructing the Party himſelf in Arguments, proper for Him to urge in his own Defence. This was done, by conferring frequently together, preparing Allegations before-hand, and, at the Day of Hearing, encouraging him to ſpeak boldly; ſuggeſting proper Matter, and prompting him with ſo much Care and Prudence, that nothing material or uſeful ſhould ſlip him. Of this Aſſiſtance the Apoſtles had very great need. They were entring into Controverſy with a whole World at once. A Controverſy, which, ſo far as their own Endowments, natural or acquired, were concerned; They, of all Men breathing, were leaſt qualified to manage or maintain. Upon this Account our Lord commands them, to rely entirely upon the Wiſdom and Watchfulneſs of a heavenly Monitor. One, who would not fail them in their greateſt Extremities; but without any Study or Eloquence of their own, be ſure to order Matters ſo, that they ſhould come off with Honour, and

and their Enemies, with Shame and Confuſion. Thus in Effect it was, and thus our Lord declared it ſhould be. *Ye ſhall be brought before Governors and Kings, for a Teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no Thought how or what ye ſhall ſpeak; for it ſhall be given you in that ſame Hour, what ye ſhall ſpeak.* Or, as St. *Luke* hath it, *For I will give you a Mouth and Wiſdom, which all your Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor reſiſt.* Matt. x. 18, 19. Luke xxi. 15.

And, for their being ſo much above the Power of Contradiction, our Lord himſelf aſſigns this very Cauſe; *For it is not you that ſpeak, but the Spirit of my Father which ſpeaketh in you.* Matt. x. 20.

And ſuch Effects as theſe, were the Teſtimony, which the Spirit is ſaid to bear concerning Chriſt: Extraordinary Gifts, and Powers, plainly ſupernatural, and of Divine Original. Theſe were the reaſonable, the moſt effectual, Inſtruments of perfecting the Faith of the Apoſtles themſelves, and of creating and confirming it, in the Perſons taught by them. To theſe St. *Paul* applies that of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Thou art gone up on high, thou haſt led Captivity Captive, and given Gifts unto Men:* So making the liberal Effuſions of thoſe Days anſwer the Diſtributions, uſual at the ſolemn Inaugurations and Triumphs of Princes. And ſuch was the glorious Entry made by our Lord into Heaven: A ſolemnizing his Conqueſt over Death, and Hell, and every Enemy; a Taking full and quiet Poſſeſſion of his Throne and Kingdom. Of that Inthroning, the Holy Ghoſt, ſhed abroad according to his Promiſe, was a convincing Demonſtration. An Inſtance of the Truth and boundleſs Power of Him, by whom he was given: And an Evidence, how dear thoſe Perſons, and that Cauſe, were to God; in Vindication whereof this Gift was, in ſo plentiful and aſtoniſhing a Manner, received: And conſequently, how ſafely all Their Doctrines Eph. iv. 8.

and

and Reports might be depended upon, who brought ſuch Credentials of their Veracity.

The following Part of this Day's Goſpel offers a fair Occaſion, for ſhewing the Sinfulneſs and Danger of Miſtaken Zeal, and thoſe Violent Methods, which it is apt to puſh Men upon. A very profitable, and but too ſeaſonable a Subject; had not the Neceſſity of treating it here been ſuperſeded, by what hath already occurred to my Reader, upon the Goſpel for St. *Stephen*'s Day.

WHITSUNDAY.

The COLLECT.

Acts ii. 3. GOD, who at this Time didſt teach the Hearts of thy faithful People, by the ſending to them the Light of thy Holy Spirit; grant us
1 *Cor.* ii. 15. by the ſame Spirit to have a right Judgment in all Things, and evermore to rejoice in his Holy Comfort: Through the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the Unity of the ſame Spirit, one God, World without End. *Amen.*

THE Bleſſing commemorated at this Feſtival, is at large ſet forth in the Service proper for it, and will fall under Conſideration, in the Treatiſes on the ſeveral Portions of Scripture, appointed for the Epiſtles and Goſpels. Mean while, for the Inſtruction of the Vulgar Reader, I would take Notice of the Reaſon of this Title, which in our Language, it moſt commonly goes by; that of *Whitſunday*.

The moſt received Notion is, that the Word is at length *White-Sunday*; So called from the White Garments, worn by the Perſons baptized in the Ancient Church. For the Adminiſtring of which Sacrament,

Eaſter,

Eaſter, and *This*, and the Sundays between, were the moſt ſolemn Seaſons. Particularly on this Day, the laſt of thoſe Sundays; (when that Solemnity determined, and the Preparation for it had been extended to the utmoſt length) As well on that Account, as for the deſerved Veneration due to ſo great a Feſtival, vaſt Numbers offered themſelves to be received to Baptiſm. And, in token of their being cleanſed from all paſt Sins, as well as for an Emblem of that Innocence and Purity, to which they then obliged themſelves, they were clad in white: And from the Multitude of ſuch Veſtments then put on, are ſuppoſed to have given Occaſion for this Lord's Day being diſtinguiſhed by that Name.

'Tis true, the Sunday next after *Eaſter*, was anciently ſtiled *Dominica in Albis*, on this very Occaſion. Which an ingenious Author, of our Nation, hath obſerved to be in Appearance leſs proper than *Dominica poſt Albas*. That referring to the White Garments put on by Perſons baptized on *Eaſter* Day, but worn uſually for ſeven Days; and therefore, according to the Cuſtom then obtaining, laid aſide the Eighth, that is, the Lord's Day following. He there interpoſes his Conjecture, that this might be called, and written heretofore *Huit-Sunday*, that is, the *Eighth*. For ſo it is in order, reckoning *Eaſter-Day* the *Firſt*. Which was anciently eſteemed ſo among the Chriſtian, as the Paſſover, to which it anſwers, had been among Jewiſh, Solemnities.

Hammond L'Eſtrange, *Alliance of Divine Offices.*

Let this ſuffice for the common Appellation of the Day. To take a ſhort Notice whereof is ſufficient; but to criticize too long or too nicely upon it, would detain us from Matters more ſubſtantial and edifying. To thoſe therefore I now proceed.

WHITSUNDAY.

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Acts ii. 1.

1. On the fiftieth Day after the Paſſover, and Feaſt of unleavened Bread, called for that Reaſon the Pentecoſt, the Diſciples were met together to ſolemnize the Feaſt of Weeks, or Feaſt of Harveſt. So called, becauſe juſt ſeven Weeks after the Sabbath of the Former (which was the Firſt, as this was the Second) great Feſtival of the Jews, wherein all the Males were commanded to appear before the Lord, to offer the Firſt-fruits of their Second, or Wheat, Harveſt.

Exod. xxiii. Lev. xxiii. Deut. xvi.

1. *AND when the Day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one Accord in one Place.*

2. While they were thus aſſembled, an unuſual Sound was heard from Heaven, like that of a ſtrong Wind.

2. *And ſuddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty Wind, and it filled all the Houſe where they were ſitting.*

3. And upon each of the Diſciples a Form was ſeen to reſt, like that of a cloven Tongue for Shape, and bright like Fire.

3. *And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it ſat upon each of them.*

4. Whereupon they were all inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, and delivered ſuch Things as the Spirit dictated, in different Languages, which they had never learnt.

4. *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.*

5. There being then at *Jeruſalem*, on the Account of celebrating this Feſtival, People of all Countries, whither the *Jews* had been ſcattered.

5. *And there were dwelling at Jeruſalem Jews, devout Men, out of every Nation under Heaven.*

6. This Event drew vaſt Numbers together, who were all aſtoniſhed to hear theſe Diſciples apply themſelves to them in the Languages, proper to the ſeveral Places where each of the Hearers was born or dwelt.

6. *Now when this was noiſed abroad, the Multitude came together and were confounded, becauſe that every Man heard them ſpeak in his own Language.*

7. *And they were all amazed and marvelled, ſaying one to another, Behold are not all theſe which ſpeak Galileans?*

8. *And how hear we every Man in our own Tongue wherein we were born?*

9. *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the Dwellers in Meſopotamia, and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Aſia,*

10. *Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the Parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and Strangers of Rome, Jews and Proſelytes,*

11. *Cretes and Arabians; we do hear them ſpeak in our Tongues the wonderful Works of God.*

7. This Surprize they could not forbear to expreſs as follows.

COMMENT.

THIS Scripture relates one of the moſt important Events that ever happened to Mankind. For ſuch was the Miſſion of the Holy Spirit, and the pouring out his miraculous Gifts upon the Diſciples, in a manner moſt amazing, moſt effectual for the mighty Purpoſes, appointed to be accompliſhed by their Means. An Event, deſervedly commemorated by the Chriſtian Church; ſince the Influence of it extends to all Ages; and the Benefit conſequent upon it is no leſs, than the Converſion and Inſtruction of a whole World. Upon this Occaſion firſt, that Power from on high exerted itſelf, wherewith our Lord promiſed to endue thoſe Delegates, to whom he had committed the Care of finiſhing the Great Work. A Work, which himſelf declares neceſſary to have been begun in his own Perſon; but to have been carried on and finiſhed by other Hands. And the Circumſtances, that concurred to give Authority and Efficacy to their Undertaking, are too weighty to be neglected, in a Diſcourſe upon it. Such in particular are the Time, the Place, the ſurprizing Appearances of this Spirit's Deſcent. All of great Significance and Conſideration: though ſuch more eſpecially indeed were the immediate Effects it produced: and the Condition of the Perſons, ſo powerfully wrought upon by it. To each

of these my Design is to say something, in such Proportion, as the proper Measure of this Discourse will allow.

I. I begin with the Time; expressed in those Words,

Ver. 1. *When the Day of Pentecost was fully come.*

Exod. xii. 2. The Day of Pentecost is the fiftieth Day: For so this was, of the *Jewish* Year, the Supputation whereof, by God's express Command, began from the Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread. Concerning the Pentecost we read this Ordi-

Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. nance, *Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the Day that ye brought the Sheaf of the Wave-offering, seven Sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the Morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty Days, and ye shall offer a new Meat-Offering unto the Lord.* Hence, from the seven

Deut. xvi. 9. Weeks Interval, this was called the *Feast of Weeks:* and it is the Second of those Three Great Solemnities, in which all the Males of

Ibid. Ver. 16. Exod. xxiv. 23. ——xxiii. 17. *Israel* were strictly enjoined to *appear before the Lord*, in the Place that he should choose. As therefore on the former of these Feast-Days, (that of First Fruits and unleavened

1 Cor. xv. 20. Bread) Christ, *the First-fruits of them that slept*, arose from the Dead; so in the latter Part, or Morning of the Second Feast, the Holy Ghost descended on the Disciples: The fiftieth Day, according to the *Jews*, who begin to reckon from Sunset at the *third Hour* of the Vulgar Day, or Nine in the Morning, being thus (as St *Luke* emphatically speaks)

Ver. 15. *fully come*, and drawing toward a Conclusion. I add, that on this Day the *Jews* were commanded to offer the First-Fruits of their Se-

Exod. xxiii. 16. cond or Wheat Harvest: as in the Former Festival they did those of their First or Barley Harvest: called, upon that Account, *the Time*

Deut. xvi. 9, 10. when they *began to put their Sickle to the Corn*, from whence the Computation of seven Weeks was to commence.

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The preciſe Time of the Holy Ghoſt's Deſcent, thus explained, will furniſh us with theſe following Remarks.

1. That *Jeruſalem* now being full with Perſons from all Quarters, obliged to reſort thither upon a religious Account, this gave the greater Opportunity, for an Event ſo extraordinary being more generally obſerved, more nicely examined, more ſpeedily publiſhed abroad, through the many and diſtant Regions, whither the People now aſſembled would ſhortly diſperſe themſelves. Not only ſo, but by thus timing the Matter, thoſe very Perſons, who, at the laſt great Feaſt, had been Eye-witneſſes of our Lord's Sufferings and Shame, would have now the ſame Evidence of his Truth and Glory, by thoſe Powers of the Spirit conferred, and thoſe Miracles wrought in his Name, at their Attendance on this Second Feſtival, as were an Over-ballance to the Scandal of his Croſs. And what can in Reaſon make more for the Truth of this Miracle, than that it offered itſelf ſo openly, to the Judgment of Multitudes of People, in their preſent Perſuaſion violently bent againſt the Doctrines it was intended to eſtabliſh? Surely, as one of the Goſpels for this holy Seaſon argues, a more convincing Mark there cannot be of any one's *doing the Truth*, than his *coming* thus *to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God.* John iii. 21.

2. It is obſervable, *Secondly*, That the Foundation of thoſe *Jewiſh* Feſtivals is laid in ſome very valuable Mercy, the preſerving a grateful Remembrance whereof was one, probably the principal, End of their Inſtitution. Thus the Paſſover was a yearly Commemoration of their coming out of *Egypt*; That of Tabernacles, of their Sojourning ſafely in the Wilderneſs; And this of Weeks, of their receiving the Law on Mount *Sinai*, the fiftieth Day exactly, after their getting quit of the *Egyptian* Bondage. Thus, Exod. xii. Levit. xxiii. 43. Exod. xix. 1. Maim. More. Nev. *p.* 111. *c.* 43.

as the Time of Christ's Death and Resurrection corresponded with that of killing the Passover and offering the First Fruits; so did the Coming of the Holy Ghost, to publish the New and Evangelical, comport with the Day of God's proclaiming the Old Law. And, as then too the First-Fruits of the Second Harvest were brought; Then, in like manner, did God increase and crown the Attainments of these Disciples, under the Conduct of his Son. Then did he pour upon them the *First Fruits of the Spirit*; and enable them to bring him the same Day an Offering of *three thousand Souls*: A noble First-Fruits of the Converts won by their Preaching. Mean while, this Agreement manifestly proves, that the same God instituted both the Law and the Gospel, that his Church is one and the same, under both Dispensations. There is indeed this only Difference; that the former was its more imperfect and weak, the latter its more improved and mature State. And consequently, it betrays too wretched either Ignorance or Perverseness, to admit no Correspondence between *Jewish* and Christian Institutions, in any Case; or to imagine, that, when the Typical Part ceased, and gave Place to the Substance; all the rest of those Usages, which had not the like View and Import, were condemned and exploded, as carnal and unlawful.

Rom. viii. 23.

Acts ii. 41.

Leo. *Serm.* 1. de Pent.

3. I observe once more, that this Miracle fell out on the *First* Day of the Week. Of this no Doubt can remain; since we are told so often, that upon that Day our Lord rose from the Dead, the Fiftieth from whence, inclusive, will of Necessity be the First likewise. This I mention, to shew, what Reason the Apostles then, and the Church ever since, had to make this the Day of Solemn Worship. Let me say rather, what Reason they had to conclude, that God had made it so to Christians; when his wise Providence so ordered Matters, that the old *Jewish* Sabbath, the Seventh

Seventh Day, ſhould be paſſed over: and this Firſt made Choice of, to be honoured with two ſuch glorious Miracles, as the Reſurrection of our bleſſed Lord from the Dead, and the Coming of the Holy Ghoſt from Heaven: The one to juſtify, the other to enlighten and ſanctify: The former to finiſh and prove, the other to proclaim and qualify us for, Salvation.

II. The next Circumſtance, proper to be taken notice of in this Affair, is the *Place*, where it was done. This, ſpeaking more at large, we are aſſured, was *Jeruſalem*. Here the Feaſt was by the Law to be kept: From hence the Diſciples were forbidden to depart, till they ſhould receive this Promiſe of the Father: And hither the Confluence of the vaſt Numbers, who ſaw, and believed, and atteſted to it, is ſaid to have been. Nay, here it muſt needs have been; for ſo the Accompliſhment of antient Prophecies required, importing a prodigious and moſt happy Enlargement of God's Church, to ſet out from hence; *For the Law ſhall go forth of* Zion: *and the Word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem.

Deut. xvi. 16. Luke xxiv. 49.

Iſa. ii. 3. Mic. iv. 2.

But, in a more confined Senſe, the Place of this Miracle was a Room, where the Diſciples were gathered together. Moſt Interpreters incline to think it That, mentioned in the *Firſt* Chapter, whither they retired after our Lord's Aſcenſion. But none, I think, have queſtioned the Occaſion of their Meeting to have been for the Exerciſe of Piety and Devotion. Now This is certainly a good Intimation, *that* the Duties of Religion are the beſt Expedient for inviting the Spirit of God: *That* Prayer is neceſſary, not only to obtain, but to prepare us for, his Divine Influences: *That* the Aſſemblies of the Saints are the Places, which he delights to frequent, and is moſt likely to be found in: And that this Spirit of Love, and Order, and Unity, beſtows his Gifts moſt bountifully, where the Servants of Chriſt are aſſembled, not in *one Place* only, but alſo *with one Accord*. For the

Ver. 13.

Author of Peace cannot be a Favourer of Diſcord and Confuſion. Therefore, how loudly ſoever ſome, who diſturb the Peace, and divide the Members of the Church, may boaſt of his Gifts and uncommon Favours; we have great Reaſon to ſuſpect, that ſuch bold Pretences to the Spirit are empty and unfaithful; ſtudied Impoſtures upon others, or dangerous Deluſions upon themſelves.

III. I come now to conſider, in the *Third* Place, the remarkable and ſurprizing Appearances of this Holy Spirit's Deſcent upon the Apoſtles.

The Nature of Man is ſuch, that in this mortal State, thoſe Things that enter by and ſtrongly affect the Outward, come beſt prepared to make due Impreſſion upon the Inward Man. Hence, upon all extraordinary Manifeſtations of himſelf, God hath been wont to make uſe of ſome ſenſible Repreſentations, the better to convey into the Minds of his Servants ſuch Ideas, as they were choſen, and naturally adapted, to awaken there. Such were the Circumſtances of the Holy Spirit's Miſſion at this Time. Each very ſignificant of the inward Operations, which the Apoſtles then, and others in Proportion afterwards, were to expect, upon receiving him into their Hearts.

1. The *Firſt* of theſe is deſcribed by a *ſudden Sound from Heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty Wind, which filled all the Houſe where they were ſitting*. The Suddenneſs of this Sound, and the Point of Direction whence it came, were of uſe, to ſtrike an Awe upon the Perſons, and prepare them with more profound Humility and Reverence, to receive the Approaches God was making toward them. And the Reſemblance of Wind is, of all others, moſt familiar in Scripture, to figure the Spirit of God, his Powers and his Effects. What can indeed be more proper to repreſent the Freedom of his Grace, and at the ſame Time the Power of its Operation, than *the Wind which bloweth where it liſteth*, and the *Sound whereof* we *hear*, though we *cannot tell*, *whence*

Ver. 2.

John iii. 8.

whence it cometh, and whither it goeth? What could better ſignify to us thoſe refreſhing cleanſing Influences, which fill, and penetrate, and move the Hearts of Men, which raiſe a new and happy Ferment there, and lift them up to Heaven, by infuſing pious Diſpoſitions; than Wind, which, like that Spirit, is in itſelf inviſible: Like that again is wonderful and unaccountable, in the Manner of its working; but in its Force and Efficacy, notorious and undeniable? So great Affinity there is, between the Natural and Spiritual Creation; between the rude undigeſted Matter of the One, and the Impotence and Indiſpoſition of our Minds in the Other. So hath this Spirit of God, in each Caſe, moved upon the Face of the Deep, and formed it in Order and Capacity for ſuch Productions, as He, who made them, may ſee and pronounce very good. Gen. i.

2. The next Thing obſervable is the Appearance of *cloven Tongues*, ſitting on the Heads of theſe Diſciples. By which was figured the Ability given to them, to accommodate themſelves to Hearers of all Nations; not in one or two, but in as many Languages, as might render what they delivered intelligible, to all they had Occaſion to treat with. The Diverſity of the Languages was intimated by the Clefts in theſe Tongues; as the Readineſs and Aptneſs of their Expreſſions and Arguments was by the Tongues themſelves. And poſſibly the ſitting of theſe Tongues might ſignify, that this was no ſuch tranſient Effect, as ſhould immediately vaniſh; but ſuch, as was allowed to continue, and to be, by their Miniſtry, diffuſed and communicated to others, ſo long as the Neceſſities of the Church, and the Propagation of the Chriſtian Faith, ſhould require it. Thus it pleaſed God, who introduced Variety of Languages, as a Curſe and Puniſhment of Man's Sin and Rebellion, and in great Meaſure a Cauſe of Ignorance and Confuſion in the World; by a Turn Gen. xi.

of Events (peculiar to him, whoſe Prerogative it is to bring Good out of Evil, and Light out of Darkneſs) to render the ſame Variety an Inſtrument of the quickeſt attaining to the beſt Knowledge, a powerful Motive to Obedience, and a Means of eſtabliſhing the moſt perfect Order and Happineſs of Mankind.

3. A farther Remark offers itſelf upon this Occaſion, which is, that theſe Tongues had the Reſemblance of *Fire*. And a very fit Reſemblance this was of the Light theſe Diſciples received, by the Acceſſion of the Holy Spirit: The clear unerring Knowledge they attained of all Things, which it concerned Perſons in that high Character and weighty Truſt, perfectly to underſtand. The forcible Arguments, as well as the intelligible Expreſſions, requiſite to convince, to inſtruct, to awaken, to win over, the miſtaken, the ignorant, the inſenſible, the prejudiced World. So was it alſo, of that Zeal and fearleſs Courage, which now, like Fire, had ſpread itſelf into their Hearts; and kindled ſuch a vital and vigorous Heat there, that from henceforth we hear no more of any of them trembling at the Charge of belonging to *Jeſus*, denying their Lord, or aſſembling privately, and with Doors ſhut; But putting themſelves forward induſtriouſly, preaching and working Miracles boldly, in the Temple, the Synagogues, the Streets; confronting Councils and Courts of Juſtice publickly; declaring, that whatever were the Conſequences, they muſt and would ſpeak what they had ſeen and heard; and when treated as Malefactors upon this Account, rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to ſuffer, for the Sake and Name of a crucified Maſter. So perfectly had this Divine Fire ſeized upon every Faculty, conſumed the Droſs of Frailty and worldly Affections, and expell'd all the Cowardice and Coldneſs of Human Nature. So ſuddenly, ſo wonderfully, did it exalt and refine their Thoughts and Deſires; and render them

Acts iii. 4, 5.

Acts v. 41.

like

like thoſe Bodies, whoſe every Particle is penetrated by this ſubtile Element. For, the more ſolid thoſe Bodies naturally are; the fiercer is the Heat they take, the longer do they retain it, and the leſs are they conſumed by it.

This Heat in the Preachers did ſoon ſpread itſelf, and kindle a proportionable Degree of it, in their Hearers. Their Hearts too catched upon this Fire, and (as St. *Luke* elſewhere expreſſes it) *burned within them*, at the powerful Words of this Truth. A farther Effect of this Spirit; not only to warm at the firſt Hand, but to convey and diffuſe that Warmth from thence to other Objects. For ſo he did, by rendering the Exhortations and Examples of theſe few Diſciples ſo moving and ſucceſsful, that Numbers of Proſelytes were daily added to them, who did not only imitate, but rival their Zeal for a perſecuted Faith. Nay, who, in deſpight of all the Sollicitations of Fleſh and Blood to the contrary, embraced it at the known and certain Peril of their Liberties, their Lives, and every Thing that the World is uſed to count moſt dear and deſirable. Luke xxiv. 32.

But let us by all Means take Notice, that this was a gentle, and harmleſs, and kindly, not a conſuming and devouring Fire. Such Fire as that, by which God heretofore manifeſted himſelf to *Moſes* in the Buſh. An Emblem of Light and Comfort; a Warmth of Devotion and Charity, of Activity and Vigour, and undaunted Courage; not of Fierceneſs and Contention and Miſchief. And therefore they, who foment Diviſion and Diſcord, and, under Pretence of Zeal for Religion, commit Violence upon the publick Peace, or act againſt the Dictates of common Humanity, are not touched with a Coal from Above, nor do They *know what Manner of Spirit they are of*. Luke ix. 55.

IV. The immediate Effects of this Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Perſons, upon whom it was wrought,

wrought, come next to be conſidered. Now that Effect was *ſpeaking with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance*; and the Perſons, who ſpake thus, were all *Galileans*, Natives of a Country held in great Contempt among the *Jews*, and in particular, for being heavy, and ignorant, and unpoliſhed. The Men before us were known to be ſuch. Bred up to mean Trades, and deſtitute both of Capacity and Opportunity to acquire any Degree of thoſe Abilities, which they now exerted in the utmoſt Perfection. And, what could be a more evident Proof of God ſpeaking in them, and by them, than the doing that in an Inſtant, which the Study of a whole Life could hardly, if at all, qualify any Man to do? Here was no room for Deluſion, where every Hearer was a Judge for himſelf; and where thoſe that heard were ſo many, of Regions ſo diſtant, and of Languages ſo very different from each other. So amazing are the Improvements, where God condeſcends to teach; and ſo manifeſtly does it appear, that he teaches immediately by Himſelf, where Art and Nature are ſo far outdone: where the *Fooliſh* are empowered in a Moment to *confound the Wiſe*; and the *Weak* choſen to *confound the Mighty*. This left no room for *Fleſh to glory in his Preſence*, but proved itſelf, beyond all Contradiction, to be a *Power from on High*. That Power indeed is proved by every Miracle of every Sort, which theſe Diſciples wrought in infinite Variety. But yet to any one, who conſiders this Matter carefully, there will ſeveral good Reaſons diſcover themſelves, wherefore the ſpeaking with Tongues ſhould upon this Occaſion be made Choice of, as the firſt Evidence of the Holy Ghoſt's Operation upon theſe Perſons. Some of which I ſhall endeavour to make my Reader ſenſible of, in a following Diſcourſe upon this Feſtival.

Ver. 4.

Ver. 7.

1 Cor. i. 27, 29.

WHITSUNDAY.

The GOSPEL.

St. John xiv. 15.

15. *JESUS ſaid unto his Diſciples, If ye love me, keep my Commandments.*

16. *And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,*

17. *Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.*

18. *I will not leave you comfortleſs, I will come to you.*

19. *Yet a little while, and the World ſeeth me no more; but ye ſee me: becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.*

20. *At that Day ye ſhall know, that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifeſt myſelf to him.*

22. *Judas ſaith unto him, (not Iſcariot) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the World?*

PARAPHRASE.

15. Your Obedience is that Proof of your Love, which I expect.

16. I will prevail for another Comforter, to be ſent in my Place; who ſhall not, as I muſt, leave you again. But he ſhall ſupply my Place, to you, and to thoſe that come after you.

17. The Spirit,—I mean, who is then ſeen and known, when Men partake of his ſanctifying Graces, which the wicked World, becauſe ſuch, can have no Experience of; but, *&c.*

18. Thus it is, that I intend to come and comfort you.

19. Thus ſhall ye be ſenſible of my Preſence and Favour, and in virtue of my Conqueſt over Affliction and Death, ye ſhall conquer them too.

20. For this Spirit, as it makes (ſo it ſhall convince you of) the entire Union, between my Father and me, and between me and all the Members of my myſtical Body.

23. The Manifeſtation I mean, is that of inward Light and Grace; which ſhall never depart from them, who are careful to live as I have commanded them.

23. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, If a Man love me, he will keep my Words: And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.*

24. As the Spirit, ſo the Word, is originally my Father's; though both communicated to, and by me; And hence it is, that they, who do not obſerve the One, cannot partake of the Other.

24. *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my Sayings: and the Word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which ſent me.*

25. *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, being yet preſent with you.*

26. The Holy Spirit, ſent by the Father (and elſewhere ſaid to be ſent by the Son, and ſtiled the Spirit of Both. See Ch. xv. 26. xvi. 7. *Acts* ii. 18, 33. *Matt.* x. 20. *Rom.* viii. 9. *Gal.* iv. 6, &c.) to act for my Honour, in my Stead, and upon my Buſineſs, ſhall inſtruct and refreſh your Memory, with all Things neceſſary for you to know and teach.

26. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my Name, he ſhall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.*

27. *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you. Let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

28. Tho' you might for your own Convenience wiſh my Stay, yet the leaving you is more advantageous, by exalting my Human Nature to the Throne of the Father. Who, as the Root of my Divine Nature, is even in that Reſpect greater than I, who derive it from him: how much more with regard to my Human Nature? So that my going to, and abiding with Him, is to be looked on, as an Happineſs and Advancement.

28. *Ye have heard how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: For my Father is greater than I.*

29. Theſe Warnings reflected on, and compared with the Events, will, by the exact Agreement you will find between them, be a great ſtrengthening to your Faith: For which Purpoſe it is, that I diſcourſe thus with you now.

29. *And now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe.*

30. *Hereafter*

30. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

30. My Time with you now is like to be very ſhort; for the Devil, by his wicked Inſtruments, is juſt about to take away my Life. In which, though I am not obnoxious to his Power, as having no Sin:

31. *But that the World may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me Commandment, even ſo do I.*

31. Yet I give myſelf up to the Will of my Father in this Point: that the whole World may ſee and imitate my Love and Obedience, even in the moſt difficult Inſtances.

COMMENT.

THE Gifts of the Holy Spirit are uſually diſtinguiſhed into two Sorts; The Ordinary, and the Extraordinary. The Former are thoſe ſanctifying Graces, by which every good Chriſtian is regenerated, cleanſed, prevented, aſſiſted, ſtrengthened, and comforted in his Duty. The latter are thoſe miraculous Powers, which on this Day began to be imparted, as an Accompliſhment of our Bleſſed Lord's Promiſe to his Diſciples. Of the Latter we have had an Account in the Scripture for the Epiſtle; of Both it is very reaſonable to underſtand this Goſpel. Of the Ordinary from the 16th to the 25th, of the Extraordinary at the 26th Verſe. This Paſſage is a Subject moſt ſuitable to this Solemnity: A Solemnity conſecrated in peculiar Manner to the Honour of the Bleſſed Spirit of God. Having therefore already explained the Extent of his Office, as a *Comforter*; I ſhall now apply myſelf to ſet forth that Light, which this and other Paſſages have given us, into the Nature of the Holy Ghoſt. And then, *Secondly*, I will inquire into the true Meaning of that Privilege, which the Diſciples were to expect from him, contained in thoſe Words, Ver. 26. *He ſhall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.*

Concerning the Nature of this Spirit, *Firſt*, The Account given of it will, I conceive, abundantly juſtify

tify us, in making the ſeveral Concluſions that follow.

1. *Firſt*, That the Holy Ghoſt is a Perſon, and not a mere Quality, or Operation. 'Tis confeſs'd, that ſome Paſſages in the *New Teſtament*, where the Word *Spirit* is uſed, do carry that Senſe. And theſe are ſuch, as by an uſual Figure of the Cauſe for the Effect, mean only the Gifts and Influences of that Spirit. But then ſome other Paſſages are obſervable, to which no other Signification, but that of a Perſon, can fairly be apply'd. Thus this Spirit is ſaid to *come*, and to *be ſent*, to *come in the Name* of one Perſon upon a Meſſage from another; to *receive* from One, and to *ſhew* to Others: To *aſſiſt*, to *teach*, to *guide*, to refreſh the Memories of them, to whom he comes; and to diſcharge the Office of a *Paraclete*: All theſe are attributed to the Spirit, in this very Diſcourſe to the Diſciples. Elſewhere we alſo read of the Spirit *making Interceſſion*, of his being *grieved*, of his proceeding with Diſcretion and Choice, and *dividing* his Gifts to *every Man ſeverally as he will*: of *blaſpheming* him, of *lying* to him, of *tempting* him: Of Perſons being *baptized* into his Name, *ſeparated* or conſecrated to him, and *called* by him to *the Work* of the Miniſtry. Now from hence, I conceive, we are abundantly warranted to infer the Perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt; becauſe ſuch Things are here attributed to him, as cannot, with any Propriety of Speech, be affirmed of a Quality, or Operation, or indeed of any but a Perſon.

Rom. viii. 26, 27.
Eph. iv. 30.
1 Cor. xii. 11.
Matt. xi. 31, 32.
Acts v. 3, 9.
Matt. xxviii. 19.
Acts xiii. 2.

2. The Goſpel for the Day does likewiſe ſtrongly intimate, that the Spirit here ſpoken of is a Divine Perſon. For none but God can know all Truth; and none can teach all, who does not know all. None but He, who is eſſentially united to the Son of God, could bring all thoſe Things to remembrance, which the Son had ſaid: Becauſe whoever does ſo, muſt be privy

to

to all that was ſaid. This Argument St. *Paul* makes uſe of, and it is drawn indeed from Experience and Common Senſe. *What Man knoweth the Things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of a Man, which is in him? Even ſo the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.* Now it is obſervable, that the Argument, of no Mind being perfectly known by any but itſelf, is there alledged in Proof of the *Spirit's ſearching all Things, even the deep Things of God:* And to ſhew, how ſafely we may, upon that Account, yield our Aſſent to every Thing, which ſhall by this Spirit be revealed to us; though ſuch, as no Collections of our own Reaſon can give no Satisfaction in, or make any Diſcovery of. To theſe we may add thoſe other Paſſages, which call the Holy Spirit * *God* and *Lord*, which affirm, that He, † inſpired the Meſſiah, that he ſpake ** by the Prophet, and that by § his Inhabitation, regenerated Chriſtians become living Temples and Dwellings of God. As therefore the Unity of the Son with the Father is frequently implied by the Father being *ſeen of him, known by him, manifeſting himſelf to him, ſhewing him all that himſelf doth*, and the like; ſo may the Unity of the Holy Ghoſt with Father and Son both, be not unfitly gathered, from his *being ſent by the Son*, and *by the Father in the Son's Name*; *Receiving* of the *Son's* and of *the Father's, to ſhew to the Diſciples*; (for he is therefore ſaid to receive of the Son's, becauſe *all Things that the Father hath are the Son's.*) So again *Teaching*, and *calling to Mind* all that ever the Son had taught before: Eſpecially, if to all this we add, that he is expreſsly ſtiled, not only the *Spirit of God*, and the *Spirit* of the *Father*, but the *Spirit* of the *Son*, and the *Spirit of Chriſt*.

1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

* Acts xiii. 2.
—v. 3, 4, 9.
† Iſai. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18, *&c.*
** Iſai. vi. 8, 9. *Compare* Acts xxviii. 25, 26. Jerem. xxxi. 33. *Comp.* Heb. x. 15, 16. 2 Peter i. 21.
§ 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.
—— vi. 19. Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22. 1 Cor. xv. 26.

—xiv. 26.
—xvi. 14, 15.

1 Pet. iv. 14. Eph. iv. 30. Matth. x. 20. Rom. viii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 11. Gal. iv. 6.

3. The

3. The Texts referred to in the Margin, do alſo imply that Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt from the Father and the Son, which the Church hath generally received, as a Matter of Faith. For, though theſe Three Perſons be, in all Conſiderations relating to the Divine Nature, equal; ſo as that with regard to Time or Power, or any other like Perfection, none is greater or leſs than another; Yet in Dignity, and Order of Relation, there is ſome Difference. The Father is in this regard Supreme, becauſe the Original, the Source, the Root of the Godhead. A Godhead, from all Eternity communicated to the Son; who is therefore acknowledged for the Second Perſon: And the ſame Divine Nature is again imparted by Both theſe to the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe Eternal Proceſſion from the Two Former, gives him the Third Place in the Ever-bleſſed Trinity. This muſt be confeſſed a vaſt and an adorable Myſtery; too profound for Man to penetrate, or diſtinctly to conceive. For, how ſhould a poor Worm be able to comprehend the Perfections of an infinite God? But ſince Revelation teaches that ſo it is; Reaſon agrees, that it ought to be received with an humble and ſubmiſſive Faith. As God hath not, ſo I think I might venture to ſay, that (according to thoſe Bounds of Perfection, within which he hath thought fit to limit the ſeveral Beings created by him) he could not let Men into a complete Knowledge of all the Depths of the Deity. But then I add, that ſo much as he hath revealed, is ſufficient to command our Belief of thoſe Things, which we cannot perfectly know. And ſuch I take to be the Intimations given in this and other Scriptures, of the Holy Ghoſt being a Perſon, a Divine Perſon, and a Perſon proceeding from God the Father, and God the Son.

II. I come now, in the *Second* Place, to inquire into the true Meaning of that Privilege, promiſed at *Ver.* 26. by ſaying *He ſhall teach you all Things*, &c.

And

And the Queſtions that naturally offer themſelves here are Two. (1.) What is meant by *All Things*, or, as it is elſewhere expreſs'd, *All Truth?* (2.) Who are the Perſons, to whom this Promiſe belongs? whether the Apoſtles, and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, Or whether the Church, and the Paſtors of it in every Age, to the End of the World?

(1.) As to the Former of theſe Enquiries, it is generally agreed, that *All Things* here muſt not be extended to Truths of every Kind; but confined to ſuch, as the Office of the Perſons concerned in this Promiſe, and the Truſt delegated to them, requires: that is, Religious and Divine Truths. Hence Some have underſtood the 26th Verſe ſo ſtrictly, as not to allow, that any new Doctrine was communicated by the Spirit; but only that *thoſe Things* were taught more perfectly, which our Bleſſed Saviour had imparted during his Abode upon Earth: Such among theſe as were obſcure, explained; and ſuch brought to remembrance, as had been forgotten.

(2.) But, be it granted, that ſome Religious Truths were afterwards revealed to theſe Apoſtles, of which our Bleſſed Saviour made no mention; (as I think our Lord hath intimated there ſhould be) yet will it not follow from hence, that the Spirit ſhould, in equal Meaſure, aſſiſt the Succeſſors of theſe Apoſtles, and the Church Univerſal, unto the World's End. Becauſe the Teachers and Governors of it, in ſucceeding Ages, cannot ſtand in need of the ſame Security from Error, either for publiſhing new Doctrines, or for interpreting and declaring old Ones. And therefore we have Reaſon to think, that ſuch Privilege was never in our Lord's deſign, which is not agreeable to the Reaſon of the Thing. John xvi. 12, 13.

Now, that the Apoſtles themſelves ſhould be endued with the fulleſt and cleareſt Illuminations of the Spirit, was abſolutely needful; becauſe theſe Perſons were intruſted with the firſt Eſtabliſhment of the Goſ-

pel. Had not They therefore been ſo furniſhed with all neceſſary Knowledge, as to preſerve both their Judgments from Error, and their Memories from Unfaithfulneſs; no ſafe Dependance could have been had upon their Doctrines. But 'tis as plain, the ſame Neceſſity does not lie for the Spirit's infallible Guidance in After-ages; becauſe theſe Apoſtles had committed their Doctrines to Writing, and thoſe Writings were preſently received and delivered down, as the Standard of the Chriſtian Religion. So then, though the Rule itſelf muſt be exact and ſtraight, to qualify it for doing the Buſineſs of a Rule; yet there is not the ſame Occaſion for Things to be ſo, that come under this Rule, and are to be meaſured by it. The Reaſon is, becauſe whatever in theſe is crooked or defective will ſoon be diſcovered by comparing it with, and amended by conforming it to, that Rule. And thus ſtands the Caſe with the Chriſtian Religion. Had not the Apoſtles been ſafe from Falſhood and Miſtake, it could not have been ſo fixed, as to demand a rational Aſſent. Hence theſe are termed the *Foundation*, on which the Church is *built*. But all the Care left for Them that come after, is to ſuit the Building to that Foundation: To follow the firſt Model; and to ſee, that both their Materials, and their Workmanſhip, be of a Piece with it. This is St. *Paul*'s Meaning, 1 *Cor.* iii. 11. And every wiſe Builder is ſenſible, what Difference there is, between laying a Foundation, and carrying up a Superſtructure. In the Former no Nicety can be too great; in the Latter the Proportions lie ready in Sight, and a moderate Care will ſuffice; becauſe the Foundation itſelf is a Direction, for making the Reſt of the Work agreeable to it.

Eph. ii. 20.

That the utmoſt Care was actually employed in laying the Foundation of Chriſtianity, thoſe *Signs* and *Wonders* and *mighty Works*, aſſure us, by which (as the Author

Author to the *Hebrews* obſerves) God *bore witneſs* to the Apoſtles. And therefore the Continuance of this Power, which ſince hath ceaſed, was yet at that Time neceſſary: Becauſe the Miracles wrought by the Spirit gave Evidence, that the Perſons working them did both ſpeak and write by the ſame Spirit. God would not thus have ſeal'd any Doctrines, which had not been dictated and approved by himſelf, and delivered exactly according to his own Mind and Direction. Heb. ii. 4.

I cannot therefore but think, that, if Men were diſpoſed to be peaceable and fair; the Diſputes concerning the Extent and Accompliſhment of the Promiſe now under Debate, might be compromiſed to very good Content, upon Allowance of theſe following Particulars.

1. That the Promiſe to theſe Diſciples was abſolute, and proved ſo to be, by the Miracles which gave Teſtimony to them. The Condition of the Chriſtian Religion requiring ſuch infallible Aſſiſtances to be afforded Them, as might ſatisfy Poſterity, that the Grounds of it were laid in perfect and unerring Truth; and that all delivered down from theſe Hands might, without any Hazard, be firmly relied upon.

2. That theſe Diſciples have anſwered their Character and Truſt, by leaving Men Information ſufficient for their everlaſting Salvation. This was the Purport of their Commiſſion, this the End of enduing them with Wiſdom and Power from on High. And, is it to be imagined, that God would give ſo many ſignal Appearances of himſelf, in ſo great and neceſſary a Work, and leave it imperfect at laſt? And yet he hath done thus; if all neceſſary Truth be not left us by thoſe, who were divinely inſpired with this very Intent, that Men, by having Recourſe to Them, might be under no Danger of wanting any Knowledge, needful and fit for the Safety of their Souls.

3. That the Writings and Records of these Disciples do, to their Followers, supply the Place and Uses of the Spirit's infallible Guidance, vouchsafed to them. They laid the Foundation, We are to keep to it. Their Business was to plant a new Doctrine, Ours is to hold it fast. They indited the Scriptures, We have nothing to do, but to study and obey them. The Scripture, 'tis acknowledged, is the Sense, and not the Words and Syllables contained there: But the Things which are necessary, are intelligible of themselves, provided Men bring an honest Mind, and apply proper Means: And, in Things, not necessary, Men may entertain different Opinions, without Hazard to their Souls. Thus in this Spiritual House too, the Rooms may be differently framed or adorned, without Danger to themselves, or the Building; but All must hold upon the same Foundation, and unite in the principal and essential Parts of the Structure. But however, I make no Difficulty to add,

4. That this Promise, which to the Apostles was absolute, may be allowed to belong to the Church in all Ages, under certain Conditions and Limitations. They were infallible, as following the Dictates of the Holy Ghost, in all they spoke and wrote: The Church is infallible, so far as her Determinations agree with Their Writings. A Learned Man hath illustrated this Difference by a very pertinent Similitude.

Chillingworth, *Safe Way*, Ch. iii. Sect. 34.

"The Apostles and the Church (he says) "may be compared to the Star, and the "Wise Men. The Star was directed by "the Finger of God, and could not but go right, to "the Place where Christ was. But the Wise Men "were led by the Star to Christ; so, that if they "would, they might follow it; if they would not, "they might choose. So was it between the Apostles "writing Scripture, and the Church. They in their "writing were infallibly assisted, to propose nothing

"as

" as a Divine Truth, but what was ſo. The Church " is alſo lead into all Truth, but it is by the inter- " vening of the Apoſtles Writings. But it is, as the " Wiſe Men were led by the Star, or as a Traveller is " directed by a mercurial Statue, or as a Pilot by his " Card and Compaſs: Led ſufficiently, not irreſiſtibly; " led ſo, as that ſhe may follow, not ſo, as that ſhe " muſt." This ſeems to give the true State of the Caſe; and ſhews, how, in this reſpect too, the Spirit *abides* with Chriſt's Diſciples for ever. For he abides with all whom he aſſiſts; but he does not make all whom he aſſiſts infallible. We have not the like viſible and wonderful Effects of his Divine Preſence now, which the firſt Diſciples had; becauſe we need them not. But, we have, at leaſt, if not unfaithful and wanting to ourſelves, we may have, as much as is ſufficient for our preſent Circumſtances. Conſolations and Inſtructions are ever at hand to all, who are diligent to aſk and improve them; and we have abundant Ground to truſt, and to pray, that *God, who at this Time did teach the Hearts of his faithful People, by ſending to them the Light of his Holy Spirit, will grant us by the ſame Spirit to have a right Judgment in all Things, and evermore to rejoice in his Holy Comforts, through the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with the Father, in the Unity of the ſame Spirit, one God World without End.* Amen.

MONDAY *in* WHITSUN WEEK.

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Acts x. 34.

34. *THEN Peter opened his Mouth, and said, Of a Truth I perceive that God is no Respecter of Persons;*

35. *But in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him.*

36. *The Word which God sent unto the Children of Israel, preaching Peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all.)*

37. *That Word (I say) you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the Baptism which John preached:*

38. *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with Power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil: For God was with him.*

39. *And we are Witnesses of all Things which he did both in the Land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a Tree:*

40. *Him God raised up the third Day, and shewed him openly,*

41. *Not to all the People, but unto Witnesses, chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the Dead.*

42. *And he commanded us to preach unto the People, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

43. *To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his Name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive Remission of Sins.*

44. * In the same Manner, and exerting himself in the same miraculous Effects, as he did at his first plenteous Effusion on the Day of Pentecost. Compare Ch. ii. 4. with ver. 46. here, and Ch. xi. 15, &c.

44. *While Peter yet spake these Words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word*.

45. *And*

45. *And they of the Circumciſion which believed, were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt.*

46. *For they heard them ſpeak with Tongues, and magnify God. Then anſwered Peter,*

47. *Can any Man forbid Water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghoſt, as well as we?*

48. *And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain Days.*

48. Then he gave order for Water accordingly, and they were baptized (moſt probably by St. *Peter* himſelf) into the Belief of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo were made his Diſciples by the Method himſelf had appointed for that Purpoſe.

COMMENT.

THE former Part of this Scripture, which contains St. *Peter*'s Sermon to *Cornelius*, and his Company, hath been already made uſe of by our Church, in the Devotions, due to the Paſſion and Reſurrection of our Bleſſed Lord. The Latter, which is indeed the Part peculiar to the preſent Feſtival, gives us another Inſtance of the miraculous Power of the Holy Ghoſt. And, becauſe that Power did, upon this Occaſion alſo, exert itſelf, in ſpeaking with new Tongues; I have here again a fit Opportunity, for finiſhing what was Yeſterday left behind, and adding ſuch other Remarks, as the Inſtance now in hand miniſters Ground for.

Epiſt. for Eaſter-Monday.

1. I begin with that, which more immediately belongs to the Subject of Yeſterday's Diſcourſe; wherein I propoſed to offer at ſome Reaſons, for the Fitneſs, of chooſing this Inſtance of ſpeaking with Tongues, as the firſt Demonſtration of the Holy Spirit's working with and upon the Minds of the Diſciples.

2. This Gift, above any other, facilitated the Diſcharge of that Truſt, left in their Hands by Chriſt, at his Aſcent into Heaven. *Ye ſhall receive Power* (ſays he) *after that the Holy Ghoſt*

Acts i. 8.

is come upon you; *and ye ſhall be Witneſſes unto me*, *both in* Jeruſalem, *and in all* Judea, *and in* Samaria, *and unto the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth.* And again, *Go ye out into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature.* Had this new, like the former Diſpenſation, confined itſelf to One Race or Nation of Men; Diverſity of Languages had been of no farther Uſe, than any other Evidence of the Spirit, by which the Truth and Miſſion of the Preacher was confirmed. But this Religion was intended to be univerſal; no Perſon or People are excluded from the Benefit of it. Yet ſtill here were Conditions required; for nothing leſs than Faith and Obedience could intitle to thoſe Benefits. Now, as St. *Paul* argues, How ſhall Men believe without Hearing? And *how ſhall they hear without a Preacher?* And if the Hearers *know not the Meaning of the* Preacher's *Voice*, *ſhall not* They be *unto him that ſpeaketh Barbarians*, *and he that ſpeaketh be a Barbarian unto them?* The firſt Step then towards rendering the Goſpel beneficial to all Nations, muſt in Reaſon be that of qualifying the Propagators of it to converſe with all Nations. For no Argument can convince, till it be underſtood. So that, allowing the Force of the Diſciples Diſcourſe to be never ſo irreſiſtible in Point of Reaſon and Matter; Yet all this had been but a beating of the Air, and could make no Impreſſion, while couched in Terms unknown to the Parties, with whom they were to argue. Now the Capacity of reaſoning aptly and clearly, tho' but in one or a very few ſtrange Languages, is an Attainment, which coſts much Time and Difficulty, even to the moſt acute Parts and unwearied Application. How tedious then, if at all poſſible, a Work, muſt the Converſion of Foreigners have been, to Undertakers, under ſuch Diſadvantages, as the Apoſtles and Diſciples of *Jeſus* manifeſtly laboured with? And therefore, how neceſſary a Gift was this of Tongues, above any other, for Them, whoſe Com-

Mark xvi. 15.

Rom. x. 14.

1 Cor. xiv. 11.

miſſion

miſſion extended to every Nation and Language under Heaven? Eſpecially, if it be conſidered,

2. That this, in the Reaſon of the Thing, would be a certain Expedient, not only for conveying the Knowledge of what they taught to the Underſtanding, but for gaining it Authority and Influence upon the Affections of their Hearers. Put the Caſe, they could have acquired a Readineſs of expreſſing themſelves by their own Induſtry; this might indeed procure to them Eſteem and Applauſe: But, of what Force is Eſteem and Applauſe, for prevailing with Men to embrace new Doctrines and Myſterious Truths, to root out inveterate and agreeable Corruptions, and to plant Mortification, ſevere Virtue, and Self-denial, in their Stead? No Authority leſs than Divine, is ſufficient to perſuade to ſuch a Change. No Faculty attained by human Methods, can prove a Divine Authority. But, when clear Evidence is made of this in one Inſtance, no Difficulty will be found in believing it in others. Allowing therefore theſe Diſciples to have ſpoken with other Tongues by Divine Inſpiration: The natural Conſequence of this would be, that the Matter ſpoken of was of the ſame Original, and divinely inſpired too. It being unconceivable, that God would be at the Expence of a Miracle, to furniſh Men at this Rate, with Words to expreſs any Doctrine, which was not of his own dictating. And therefore this Miracle in particular was exceedingly ſerviceable; becauſe it rendered the Perſons endued with it, perſuaſive, and powerful, and convincing, by this very Manner of rendring them intelligible.

3. The Laſt Particular proceeded upon a Suppoſition of theſe new Tongues being a miraculous Gift. I add, *Thirdly*, that the Manner of imparting, and exerciſing them, plainly proves, that they were ſo. That all extraordinary Graces of the Spirit were imparted, at certain Times, and in certain Meaſures, not unneceſſarily and promiſcuouſly diſtributed, ſeems to be reaſonably

ſonably inferred from ſundry Paſſages in Scripture. Even theſe new Tongues were plainly limited. For it is ſaid, they ſpake *as the Spirit gave them Utterance*. And ſuch Utterance no doubt was proportion'd, to the Advantage of Religion, and the Occaſions of the Church. In Matters foreign to theſe, the Diſciples continued to be common, or even below the Level of common Men. To this Purpoſe, we read, that the Council of the *Jews* did ſome Time after, upon Examination, *perceive, that Peter and John were unlearn'd and ignorant Men*, and that upon this Diſcovery they *marvelled*. And marvel well they might. Becauſe, the more of Weakneſs and Ignorance appeared in theſe Men, upon other Occaſions; the more irrefragable was the Proof, that thoſe Attainments, which were above the moſt learned to compaſs, (ſince wholly different from, and by no Means ſuitable to, their other Qualifications) could be from no Strength or Acquiſition of their own. When therefore they, whoſe Infirmities were remarkable, for not ſpeaking that of their native Country in Purity and Perfection, were found upon all Occaſions, able and ready to hold religious Conferences, in the Language of any Country whatſoever: More could not be deſired, to ſatisfy any conſiderate Hearer, that it was not, could not be, They that ſpoke, but the *Spirit of their Father which ſpoke in them*. And this it was, that rendered theſe Tongues ſo given ſuch as all their Adverſaries were unable to gainſay or reſiſt. But concerning the wonderful Accompliſhments for, and Succeſs in their Miniſtry, which theſe Diſciples received from above, another Occaſion will require me to treat ſhortly. From this General Part of the Argument I therefore turn my Thoughts to ſuch Remarks, as the Inſtance now in Hand may ſeem to require of me.

Acts ii. 4.

Acts iv. 13.

Matt. xxvi. 73. Mark xiv. 70.

Matth. x. 20.

The

The Caſe before us differs extremely from the Former. The Perſons there were Apoſtles and Teachers; here, Gentiles, Strangers, and not ſo much as Covenant Believers. There the Spirit was given, as an Ability to teach: Here it is beſtowed, as a Recompence and Approbation of the Perſons deſiring to learn. There theſe Gifts fulfilled an antecedent Promiſe, and were expected by expreſs Command: Here they prevent all Expectation; and are not only the Surprize of an Apoſtle, the Amazement of all Beholders, but even the Envy of many, who ſeem to have been favoured in like Manner before, but could not receive the News of this Honour done to the Uncircumciſed, without ſome Degree of Grudge and Indignation. But as they, when the whole Matter was rehearſed, ſaw Cauſe to rejoice and glorify God; ſo we ſhall be the likelieſt to improve by this Mercy, when the true Meaning and Extent of it is rightly underſtood. In order whereunto I would recommend the following Obſervations. Chap. xi.

1. This Paſſage ſhews, not only that thoſe Perſons, who were before in Covenant with God, as were the *Jews*; but that others alſo, as the Gentiles, who had no ſuch antecedent Relation to him, did, upon their Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith, acquire a full Right to the Privileges of the Goſpel. Plainer Proof of this could not reaſonably be had or deſired, than the miraculous Operations of the Holy Ghoſt, vouchſafed in the ſame Manner to *Cornelius*'s Company, which had before ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed the Diſciples, at the Day of Pentecoſt. And hence St. *Peter* urges this Plea, and the Apoſtles and Brethren allow it, in his Vindication; that God had diſpenſed with thoſe Rules of Behaviour commonly in uſe, which had kept up ſo wide a Diſtance between theſe two Sorts of Men. *As I began to ſpeak, the Holy Ghoſt fell on them, as on us at the beginning,—Foraſmuch then as God gave Them the like Gift, as he did unto Us, who believed* Acts xi. 15, 17. 18.

on

on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, what was I, that I could withſtand God? When they heard theſe Things, they held their Peace, and glorified God, ſaying, Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.

2. From hence, and indeed from ſundry other Paſſages in the *New Teſtament*, it appears that the new Proſelytes to the Faith were frequently, if not generally, endued with a Power of working Miracles. The ſeveral Directions for exerciſing the different Gifts of this Kind, for the Edification of the Church; the many Warnings againſt being puffed up with their own, and coveting, or envying thoſe imparted to others; are all moſt reaſonably believed to proceed upon this Ground. Of which St. *Chryſoſtom* gives this Account; That ſuch Powers were intended, for ſenſible Demonſtrations of God's Approbation, and Acknowledgement of the Perſons partaking in them. And among theſe he inſtances in that of Tongues, imparted to the Converts from Heatheniſm in particular: Thereby to make Amends, as he preſumes, for the Want of thoſe previous Helps to Chriſtianity, which they enjoyed, who had all along been brought up under, and well acquainted with, the Writings of the *Old Teſtament*. Be the Force of that Reaſon as it will, the Fact ſeems out of Diſpute: As from abundant Intimations (to call them no more) in Scripture itſelf; ſo by expreſs Teſtimonies of the moſt ancient and authentic Writers. And, what could be a greater Glory to the Apoſtles, or contribute more to the eſtabliſhing their Authority, than, that ſuch aſtoniſhing Powers were not only imparted to their own Perſons, but by their Means and Miniſtry convey'd to others, upon whom this Doctrine had its proper Efficacy?

Acts vi. viii. xix. Rom. xii. 1 Cor. xii.

Chryſ. T. 3. p. 429. Ed. Eton.

3. We ſhould by no Means neglect to obſerve, in the *Third* Place, that theſe Effuſions of the Holy Spirit, liberal, and glorious, and manifeſtly divine as they

they were, did not yet ſuperſede the Neceſſity of thoſe Sacraments, which Chriſt had left, as ordinary Marks and Means of conferring and expreſſing Church-Membership among his Followers. For what is St. *Peter*'s Inference from theſe miraculous Gifts? Is it, that the Perſons on whom they reſted, had no need of Baptiſm? No: But that theſe extraordinary Gifts were an Evidence, that God had a Favour for them, and ſaw their Sincerity, and thus was pleaſed to teſtify, that they were fit Objects for Baptiſm. Accordingly he took Care, that they ſhould immediately be made Diſciples, who had this Evidence of being Believers before. *Can any Man* (ſays he) *forbid Water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized,* Ver. 47. &c. So far is the Baptiſm of the Spirit, even where that is undeniable, from excluding the Baptiſm of Water; ſo far any of the extraordinary Methods of Grace, from intending to break in upon and overturn the regular Eſtabliſhments and Orders of the Church. And ſure one cannot wiſh a ſtronger Proof, than the Inſtance before us, that the outward Waſhing is not merely a Figure, or Repreſentation of the Inward in this Sacrament; but a Rite of Initiation, and an eſſential Part of the Sacrament. And, that the Graces of the Holy Spirit may be the Foundation of a juſt Claim to Baptiſm; but never (where that Sacrament can be had) a lawful Diſpenſation to any Man, for the Refuſal or Neglect of it.

The more uſual Courſe indeed is for thoſe inward Effects to accompany, and the Increaſe of them to follow after, the Uſe of the outward viſible Sign. Of this alſo we have remarkable Inſtances in the Book of *Acts*. One of which will be brought under Conſideration, by the Scripture appointed for To-morrow's Epiſtle.

MONDAY *in* WHITSUN WEEK.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

St. John iii. 16.

16. The Death I ſpeak of (Ver. 14, 15.) is an Effect of God's wonderful Love; who makes Uſe of this Expedient to ſave ſinful Mankind by Faith in that Son.

16. *GOD ſo loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.*

17, 18. This is the Deſign of his coming into the World, which yet takes Effect upon particular Men, only as they comply with or neglect this Condition required on their Part.

17. *For God ſent not his Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be ſaved.*

18. *He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already; becauſe he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*

19. The Aggravation of their Crime, and the Juſtice of their Puniſhment, who believe not, appears, in that they ſtand out againſt the cleareſt Evidence, and refuſe their own manifeſt Advantage, by reaſon of that Prepoſſeſſion of Mind, which their own Sins and Luſts have brought upon them.

19. *And this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are Evil.*

20, 21. For it is the Nature of Wickedneſs, to dread Diſcovery; as it is of Goodneſs, to offer itſelf freely to common Obſervation, in order to have Juſtice done to it, and Honour brought to that God, in Obedience to whom it acts.

20. *For every one that doeth Evil, hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, leſt his Deeds ſhould be reproved.*

21. *But he that doeth Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God.*

COMMENT.

THE Goſpel for this Day is of vaſt Extent and Importance. It informs us, how extremely ſolicitous God hath ſhewed himſelf for the true Intereſt and Happineſs of Mankind; and how wretchedly negligent

negligent and inſenſible a great Part of them are of their own: How much he hath condeſcended to do for them, and how little they are content to do for themſelves. The former of theſe Declarations is contained in the two Verſes at the Beginning: The latter, in the Remainder of the Paſſage now before us.

In the Former we have, *Firſt*, An Account of God's giving his Son, his begotten Son, his only begotten Son, of the ſame divine Nature and Perfections with himſelf, a Gift incomparably, infinitely more valuable, than any the moſt excellent of his Creatures. Giving this Son up to Death, to a painful and ignominious Death; for ſuch is Crucifixion, intimated by the *Son of Man being lifted up*, at the 14th Verſe. Giving him for *the World*, that is, (as I have formerly proved that Word to ſignify) for his Creatures, for the vileſt and moſt unworthy of his Creatures, Sinners and Enemies: Nay for all theſe in general. Good Lord! that even to theſe thy boundleſs Compaſſion ſhould ſhew itſelf, pitying the Miſeries, and loving the Perſons of the Offenders, at the ſame Time that it could not conſiſt with the Perfection of thy Holineſs, not to hate, and require Satisfaction for, their Offences! So juſt, ſo comfortable is the Apoſtle's Inference, which we have Leave to make on this Occaſion, *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all Things?* Rom. viii. 32.

The End deſigned to be promoted and ſecured by this Gift, is a farther Demonſtration of the Kindneſs of the Giver. Mankind by Sin had forfeited their Claim to Bliſs and Immortality: They were obnoxious to Death, as that imports the final Diſſolution of their Bodies; and that yet worſe Death, the endleſs Miſery of their Souls. Now this Son was given, that he by dying might reſcue them from the Dominion of Death, and procure to their Bodies a Reſurrection to Life again; and, that by atoning for their Guilt, he might

pacify the Wrath of God, and bring Peace and Pardon to their Souls. This was to preſerve them from *periſhing* in any Senſe; and to purchaſe for them *everlaſting Life*, in the moſt exalted and beneficial Senſe, which that Expreſſion any Way bears, or can poſſibly be capable of.

But it could not conſiſt with the Purity of God's Nature, or the Condition of Man's, to make us happy, without being holy. And therefore *Faith* in this Son is neceſſary. Not a bare ſpeculative Aſſent to his Doctrines, but ſuch a lively and active Principle, as may influence our Behaviour, and prove and recommend its Sincerity and Vigour, by a conſtant Obedience to his Commands. And this is ſo reaſonable and (in Compariſon of former Diſpenſations) ſo eaſy a Duty; that the changing our Terms ſo much for the better, and appointing Faith for the Condition of attaining a Happineſs far above all we can aſk or think, is ſtill another Inſtance, and conſiderable Enhancement, of the Love, which God was pleaſed to expreſs for the World upon this Occaſion.

Theſe Conſiderations, taken all together, leave no manner of Reaſon, to doubt the Intention of this ineſtimable Gift to have been for the general Good of Mankind; and yet, that a very great Part of them do ſtill *periſh*, and never attain to the *Everlaſting Life*, which is the proper Effect of it, cannot be denied. But our Saviour hath told us how this comes to paſs by declaring the Neceſſity of the Condition impoſed; and that the final State of every Soul, either for Life or Death, is ſo unalterably ſuſpended upon the Performance or the Neglect of this Condition; as to render the Happineſs of the Faithful and Obedient on the one Hand, and the Miſery and Puniſhment of the finally Impenitent and Unbelieving on the other, as certain, as if each were fixed already in either of theſe States reſpectively.

The

The Difference between these two Extremes is unconceivable. Exquisite Felicity makes the One, which magnifies the Mercy of the Giver: Eternal Torments the Other; which nevertheless is no Reflection upon the Justice of the Punisher: For, where the Case is so clear, the Advantages so unequal, the Terms so practicable, the Choice so free, and the Warning what will be the Consequence of such a Choice so express, how can the Obstinacy of wicked Men be excused? I should have said, how can it be accounted for, had not our Blessed Lord acquainted us, both with the Nature of the Fact, and with the Cause of it, in these Words, *This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil.* Ver. 19.

How justly the Metaphors of Light and Darkness are applied to the Truths of the Christian Revelation, and to the miserable Blindness of Mankind before they were blessed with this Guidance, hath been largely explained heretofore. The same Arguments will in great Measure hold concerning the Lives of them, who live under this Light, when they act unsuitably to so holy a Profession, and *hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*. The Darkness of these Men consists in doing those, which are so often stiled the *Works of Darkness*; and which had nothing to be offered, in Mitigation even for Heathens themselves, but that they had been educated in these Things, and knew no better. But, where the Sun of Righteousness is risen, and darts his Rays round about; their Darkness, who inhabit the happy Regions enlightened by him, is so affected, so guilty, and so monstrous; that nothing can be alledged sufficient to excuse any, who continue at High Noon to wander, and stumble, and fall, as if it were still the Dead of Night. These therefore are, in a most eminent Degree, the Per- *Epist. for the* Epiphany.

ſons that *love Darkneſs rather than Light*; and juſtly condemned for ſo abſurd and perverſe a Choice, when both Reaſon and Intereſt agree to perſuade the contrary.

To this it is commonly objected, That ſuch Condemnation however is very hard, ſuppoſing Men to govern themſelves according to their preſent Senſe of Things: Since, it is certain no Man deliberately chuſes to be miſtaken; and therefore all Error in Judgment cannot be a Fault, but is only a Misfortune.

But the Anſwer is plain and eaſy. It is allowed, that to be miſtaken in Matters of the higheſt Concern is an Evil; and that, no Evil is choſen as ſuch, but always under a wrong Apprehenſion of Good. Thus Darkneſs is not loved under the Notion of Darkneſs, but upon Pretence of it's being a better Light. Thoſe that are Infidels continue ſuch, becauſe they profeſs to have ſtronger Arguments for denying, than any urged by Us, to incline, their Belief. And they that are vicious, indulge their corrupt Luſts, becauſe they think to find their Account in gratifying, better than in denying and ſubduing them. Yet, all this notwithſtanding, if the Evidence of Reaſon over-balance on the contrary Side, themſelves are anſwerable for the falſe Inferences they make. For, though they do not chuſe the falſe Concluſion, as falſe; yet they chuſe the Premiſſes, which naturally tend, and almoſt determine them, to that falſe Concluſion. And this is our Lord's Meaning, when he aſſigns the Cauſe, why Men *love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil.*

Conſidering the Diſcomforts and diſmal Effects of Darkneſs, eſpecially of Spiritual, by far the worſt of all Darkneſs; it might have been expected, that the Perſons ſhut up under it, ſhould have ſought, have loved, and, like reſtleſs Men, after a long Night, have lain, and wiſh'd at leaſt for Break of Day. But quite contrary,

contrary, alas! the Light came, and they would none of it. The beſt and moſt glorious Light; and they preferr'd the blackeſt of all Darkneſs before it. The Reaſon of which amazing Stupidity is from the Engagements, eaſily foreſeen to follow, upon the receiving this Light. For that, which at firſt procured ſo cold Entertainment for the Chriſtian Religion, and which in Truth makes the Submiſſion to it ſtill like Ground gained Inch by Inch, is, that the Truths revealed there, are expected, not only to enlighten our Underſtandings, but to influence and regulate our Affections; to ſet Bounds to our Deſires, and be a ſtanding Rule to all our Actions. Otherwiſe, the Doctrines of it are grounded upon Facts, atteſted with greater Evidence, than any other Hiſtorical Points have ever been able to produce in their own Confirmation. And there is no Man, who diſbelieves the Goſpel, (if he be not ſo capricious, as to credit nothing, which his own Senſes have not given Demonſtration of) who does not readily aſſent to other Relations, upon much weaker Proofs. The Precepts of Religion are likewiſe ſo rational in their own Nature, ſo profitable in their Conſequences, and enforced by Motives ſo weighty; that no Man lives in Diſobedience to theſe, who does not, at the ſame Time, ſubmit to many Things more difficult and diſagreeable, upon Views leſs certain, and leſs advantageous. So that it is plain, ſuch People are far from being determined by the true Reaſon of the Thing: And therefore, whatever may be pretended, ſome other Cauſe lies at the Bottom of theſe falſe Judgments and irregular Practices.

Now of the many ill Effects, which a Courſe of Sin hath upon us, this is one of the principal, that it debauches and perverts our Underſtandings. For all habitual Sins are owing to the Predominance of ſome ungoverned Paſſion: Which the more we have accuſtomed ourſelves to indulge, the more Ground it

gets over our Reaſon, whoſe proper Buſineſs it is to govern our Paſſions. Theſe two proceed upon different Views, and purſue different Ends. The one, groſs and bodily, and ſenſual and preſent: The other refined and pure, intellectual and future Pleaſures. This is the Combat of the *Fleſh againſt the Spirit*, and the Contrariety of the *Spirit to the Fleſh*. Theſe the *Luſts*, therefore to be *abſtained from*, becauſe they *war againſt the Soul*. Theſe cloud the Reaſon of People immerſed in them, and are like a falſe Medium, which repreſents every Object otherwiſe than really it is. By the Oppoſition between Religion and them, they raiſe a Prejudice and Hatred againſt all Truths, with which it is impoſſible they ſhould be reconciled. Hence the Men, whoſe Affections are thus biaſſed, find themſelves indiſpoſed to enquire, and conſider; and when they do, they do it unfairly. They are manifeſtly averſe to receive any Principles, which muſt diſturb their beloved Enjoyments, and work a Change in their Deſires and Manner of living. So that, in all theſe Caſes, it is not the Man, but his Paſſions, and corrupt Cuſtoms, by which the Judgment is made; and He, who brings himſelf under the Dominion of theſe, hath weakned his Faculties, bent his Will, and ſo far unman'd himſelf. For he hath parted with the true Prerogative of his Nature, and loſt at once the Inclination, and the Ability, of thinking and acting rationally. And if the Caſe ſtands thus with regard to Reaſon, it muſt needs be the ſame in reſpect of Religion, which is the beſt and moſt improved Reaſon.

Gal. v. 17.

1 Pet. ii. 11.

For I appeal to the Experience of any one, who hath ſuffered an ill Habit to grow upon his Mind: Whether he do not feel a Coldneſs to all Exerciſes of Piety and Virtue; Whether he be not often loth to come to Church, to hear good Sermons, to read good Books; Whether

Whether he do not take leſs Delight in theſe Things, in proportion as he delights in his Sins more; Whether he do not ſhun, and, when that is not done, diſlike, and ſuffer great Uneaſineſs in, the Company of grave and virtuous Perſons; ſuch as are uſed to do the true Friend's Part, and tell him freely of his Faults and Failings, and preſs him hard to take new Meaſures. And what can be the Meaning of this, but becauſe he cannot endure to be awaked out of his pleaſing Dream, and therefore contrives to go on, as unmoleſted as he can? No Man cares to hear of what he cannot juſtify and yet will not amend: And therefore this is a Deluſion and Blindneſs ſo far choſen, as it willingly declines, and even dreads, the proper Means for being diſabuſed. And ſuch another fatal Choice it is, as that of giving way to Mortification, by obſtinately refuſing to let the Wound be ſearched.

I appeal again to People hardened in Vice, Whether they have not now quite other Apprehenſions of Sin, and of Religion, than thoſe their firſt Temptations found them under. Whether the Horror and Shame of the One, and the Awe and Reverence for the Other, do not ſenſibly wear away, and leſſen, upon every Breach of Duty. And whence is this, but becauſe Cuſtom renders the worſt of Crimes familiar, and hardens the Conſcience, by often preſſing upon it? Now, as the Corruption of Nature gathers Strength; that Grace, which ſhould correct it, makes more feeble Impreſſion. But ſtill this Alteration is made by Habits, and thoſe Habits are made and confirmed by repeated Acts, and each of thoſe Acts is voluntary. Admitting then, that Perſons ſo vitiated have loſt their Taſte; yet the Diſeaſe, by which the Taſte is loſt, they brought upon themſelves. And therefore, like drunken Men, they are anſwerable to Juſtice, for all the Conſequences of that Want of Underſtanding; the true Cauſe whereof is a Diſturbance and Loſs, properly their

own Act; nay and in itſelf too an *unlawful* Act and Deed.

When I ſpeak of Reaſon being perverted by Vice, I would not be underſtood only of Lewdneſs and Riot, and ſuch profligate Debaucheries as are ſcandalous and brutiſh; but of all Vices in general. For there are ſeveral, conſiſtent with Sobriety and a regular Conduct to the Eye of the World, whoſe Influence is equally malignant. Such are Pride and Vain-Glory, Covetouſneſs and Ambition, Faction and Partiality, immoderate Self-love, and poſitive Self-conceit. In ſhort, All come within the Notion of *Evil Deeds* here, which either indiſpoſe Men for examining, or prejudice them in determining. And either Way *Darkneſs* is *loved rather than Light*. For, whether they will not conſider carefully, or whether they do not judge equally, ſtill the Truth ſuffers Contempt. Which indeed is never received to purpoſe, except when *received in the Love thereof*.

Moſt juſtly therefore is Religion ſtiled Wiſdom: As upon other Accounts, ſo in particular for this, that the Love and Practice of it is ſo very eſſential to our Improvement. For a good Man ſearches boldly, and dares to find the Truth, and to acknowledge it. He is under no Fears of being reproached by any Diſcoveries he may make; and therefore he makes all he can. And he will not fail of making ſuch, as are uſeful and valuable; For to *be* what one ought to *be*, is a very great Step, towards *knowing* what one ought to *know*.

TUESDAY *in* WHITSUN WEEK.

The EPISTLE.

Acts viii. 14.

14. *WHEN the Apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John;*

15. *Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt.*

PARAPHRASE.

14, 15. *Philip* having done the utmoſt his Commiſſion extended to, by preaching to and baptizing the People of *Samaria*; the College of Apoſtles ſent two of their Number, that by their Miniſtry, theſe new Chriſtians might receive (a Bleſſing, which did not attend upon that of an inferior Order) ſuch Gifts of the Spirit, as teſtified the Favour and Acceptance of God, and anſwered the Exigencies of his Church at that Time.

16. (*For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jeſus.*)

16. It not having pleaſed God to confer this Gift upon them immediately after Baptiſm, (though in the Caſe of *Cornelius* and his Company, it even went before that Sacrament.)

17. *Then laid they their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.*

17. Accordingly thoſe two Apoſtles came, and prayed over them, and uſed the Ceremony of Laying on of Hands, whereupon the Perſons concerned in thoſe Prayers, and that Impoſition of Hands, did receive the Holy Ghoſt.

COMMENT.

THE Scripture now under Conſideration I deſign more particularly to apply, as the Generality of Interpreters, and indeed the Chriſtian Church at large, ſeem to have done, to the Rite of Confirmation. For the Practice whereof, as now uſed in the Church of *England*, let us ſee what Support this Action of the Apoſtles furniſhes. Now, what Example they have ſet, what Reaſons they have left, and what Encouragement they have given to their Succeſſors, and all the Faithful in this Matter, it will I preſume be eaſy to diſcern, from the following Obſervations.

I. *First* then, I obſerve from hence, that, in order to obtaining the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, ſomething farther ſeems ordinarily requiſite to be done, for Perſons already admitted into the Church by Baptiſm.

II. That thoſe Gifts ſeem to have been beſtowed, by the Miniſtry of the Higheſt Order of Officers in the Church.

III. That their Miniſtration upon this Occaſion conſiſted in Prayer and Laying on of Hands.

IV. The Efficacy of theſe Means to the Men of *Samaria*, and the Succeſs reaſonably to be hoped for from the Uſe of them, in the Caſe of Chriſtians in general.

I. I obſerve, that, in order to obtain the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, ſomething farther ſeems ordinarily requiſite to be done, for Perſons already admitted into the Church by Baptiſm. If the Practice of the Apoſtles may be taken for a Meaſure of their Opinion; two Inſtances, in the Book of *Acts*, ſet this Matter ſufficiently clear. Here we find the *Samaritans* converted, diligent Attenders to, and zealous Believers of the Chriſtian Doctrine, received into Chriſt's Flock and Family by Baptiſm; And yet, to make theſe good Beginnings complete, the Apoſtles were ſent down, in order to implore thoſe Aſſiſtances and Powers of the Holy Ghoſt, which as yet were *fallen upon none of them*, notwithſtanding *they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jeſus.* The other Caſe of St. *Paul* at *Epheſus* ſtrengthens this Evidence very much. He, upon Enquiry, finding that ſome Diſciples there were ſo far from having themſelves received, that they had not ſo much as heard of, any Effuſions of the Holy Ghoſt; and, that they had hitherto been baptized into *John*'s Baptiſm only; firſt explains, and then adminiſters to them, Baptiſm in *the Name of the Lord Jeſus.* After which follows, that,

Ver. 16.

Chap. xix.

Ver. 1—3.

Ver. 4, 5.

that, upon *Paul's laying his Hands upon them, the Holy Ghoſt came on them.* Now that *Laying on of Hands* was a Rite, diſtinct from Baptiſm, and one of the *Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*, we need no better Teſtimony, than the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. And no leſs clear it is, that, conſequent to this Rite, there was a conferring of the Holy Ghoſt, diſtinct from any Thing received in Baptiſm. To which Purpoſe Confirmation is, in ſome ancient Writers, term'd a *Seal*. And St. *Paul*'s Action at *Epheſus*, mentioned juſt now, hath been thought to be referr'd to, in thoſe Words of his Epiſtle to the Chriſtians of that City. *In whom* (i. e. Chriſt) *alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that Holy Spirit of Promiſe, which is the Earneſt of our Inheritance.* The ſame Interpretation ſome have put upon another Place in this Epiſtle, where they are forbidden to *grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they were ſealed to the Day of Redemption.* And that to the *Corinthians, He which ſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt, and hath anointed us, is God: Who hath alſo ſealed us, and given the Earneſt of the Spirit in our Hearts.*

Ver. 6.

Heb. vi. 1, 2.

Cypr. *Epiſt.* 73. Ambroſe de Initiat. *cap.* vii.

Ch. i. 13.

Ch. iv. 30.

2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

To this, I own, it may be ſaid; that thoſe Gifts of the Spirit, with which the Impoſition of the Apoſtles Hands was uſually attended, differed extremely from any imparted now. Thus much is expreſsly affirm'd of the Diſciples at *Epheſus*; and with great Probability believed of the other Inſtances. Since then the miraculous Powers, antiently communicated by this Rite, have long ago ceaſed; why ſhould not the Practice itſelf ceaſe, or what Effect can we ever expect from it?

Now it is to be conſidered, on the other Hand, that by the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, are to be underſtood, not only the ſeveral Powers diſtributed in the Primitive

mitive Church for working Miracles, but every Sort of Grace and Aſſiſtance, attributed to this Spirit, as the Author of Sanctification to Mankind. Allowing therefore, that the firſt Chriſtians were, at *Laying on of Hands*, endued with ſuch extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, as God thought fit then to do Honour to this Religion by: Yet even thus the Rite may, and ſtill does, very reaſonably continue, for the actual conferring ſuch other valuable and neceſſary Benefits, as Chriſtians in every Age are encouraged to pray for, and depend upon, by virtue of the ſame Spirit. And theſe, by way of diſtinction from the Former, are uſually ſtiled the *Common* and *Ordinary* Graces of the Spirit.

Again, The Workings of this Spirit are gentle and gradual, and his Aſſiſtances communicated in proper Times and Proportions. He was given by Chriſt to the Apoſtles, before his Aſcent into Heaven; and he was given again, in a different Manner and Meaſure, at the Day of Pentecoſt. In both Caſes ſo, as that neither did the Firſt Donation make the Second unneceſſary, nor the Second rob the Firſt of it's due Honour and Efficacy. Thus are the ordinary Graces infuſed with Diſtinction. At Baptiſm firſt, at Confirmation afterwards: Yet ſo in Each, that Baptiſm aſks Confirmation to finiſh and conſummate the Chriſtian; and Confirmation preſuppoſes Baptiſm, as Strength implies Life, and to Grow to have been Born. *The Holy Ghoſt*, (ſays an ancient Writer) *which deſcends with ſaving Influence upon the Waters of Baptiſm, doth there give that Fulneſs, which ſufficeth for Innocency, and afterwards in Confirmation he exhibits an Increaſe of farther Grace.* In the Former he liſts Chriſt's Soldiers under his Banner: In the Latter he equips and arms them for the Battle. This ſeems to have been the concurrent Senſe and Language of Antiquity; And, as the Notion they had of the Neceſſity of this Rite

John xx.

Acts ii.

So Cyprian. Ambr. *and* Euſeb. Emiſſ. Ser. in Pentecoſt.

Rite to perfect what had gone before, preſerved it's conſtant Uſe; ſo the Dignity of it ſeems deſigned to be ſignified, by that which I made my

II. *Second* Obſervation, the reſerving thoſe Adminiſtrations, in which the Holy Ghoſt is thus beſtowed, to the higheſt Order of Officers in the Church. The People of *Samaria* had proceeded, as far as *Philip* could lead them. He was of an Order, inſtituted originally to aſſiſt in charitable Diſtributions, but allowed upon Occaſion to preach the Word, and, in the Abſence of a Higher Officer, to baptize. The Apoſtles therefore at *Jeruſalem*, in order to make theſe new Converts Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, ſend down Two of their own Number, to perform a Service, peculiar to that higheſt Rank and their Succeſſors; and conſequently ſuch, as *Philip*, and all of any inferior Degree, were excluded from. In Agreement with this Method of Proceeding, we find in ſucceeding Times, when the Biſhops were preſent, and the Parties baptized were at Years of Diſcretion, Confirmation immediately followed Baptiſm. And the two only Reaſons of delaying it appear to be, Either the Infancy of the Perſons baptized, or the Abſence of the Biſhop, who is the proper Miniſter of this Holy Rite. Mean while the Church in all Ages reſerving this as the Biſhop's inviolable Peculiar, could not better and more effectually, than by ſo doing, expreſs her conſtant Opinion, both of the profound Reverence due to this Rite, and of the important Conſequences to be expected from the Obſervance of it. Acts vi. viii. xxi.

III. My *Third* Obſervation regards the Means, whereby the Holy Ghoſt was beſtowed on the Men of *Samaria*, and, in proportion, upon other confirmed Chriſtians: Which the 15th and 17th Verſes evidently ſhew to have been *Prayer* and *laying on of the* Apoſtles *Hands*.

1. The Former of theſe is *Prayer*. A Service appointed, to teſtify our entire Dependance upon the Goodneſs of God, to expreſs Ver. 15.

the

the Senſe of our Wants, and to obtain Supplies ſuitable to them. But, as no Wants are of equal Neceſſity, nor any Supplies of equal Value and Conſequence, with our Spiritual; ſo are there none, which we are allowed with equal Security to rely upon being furniſhed and aſſiſted in. It is with regard to theſe more eſpecially, that we are encouraged by that gracious Invitation, *Aſk and ye ſhall have, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you.* And the *good Things*, which, in one Evangeliſt, *our heavenly Father* is ſaid to beſtow, are explained in another, by declaring, that he will give *the Holy Spirit, to them that aſk him.*

Comp. Matt. vii. 11. *with* Luke xi. 13.

The Graces of this Spirit are therefore the proper Object of a Chriſtian's moſt zealous Importunity. We are to aſk them for ourſelves: We are to aſk them for one another; but eſpecially the Church, by its Spiritual Fathers, is to aſk them for all the Children and Family of God. Thus did the Apoſtles here for the newly baptized Proſelytes at *Samaria*; thus, after their Example, do their Succeſſors the Biſhops, in the Holy Rite of Confirmation. Of which Rite Prayer is deſervedly eſteemed an eſſential Part: As having in this particular Exigence ſuch glorious Promiſes to juſtify it: And as an humble Acknowledgment that the precious Gifts conferred on this Occaſion, are not the Effect of their own Power and Holineſs, but of his abundant Mercy, who does Honour to their Character, and his own Inſtitution, by granting the Requeſts of Men, to whom he hath committed ſo weighty a Truſt, as the Government of his Church.

See Coll. *for* Confirm.

2. The other Part of this Solemnity is Impoſition of Hands. Of which we have frequent Inſtances in Scripture, whereby it ſeems to be principally directed to the *Two* following Purpoſes.

Ver. 17.

1. The

1. The determining one's ſelf to thoſe particular Perſons, on whom the Hands are laid. Thus *Jacob* and others, in the *Old Teſtament*, ſeem, in the Acts of Praying and Bleſſing, to reſtrain the Mercies, implored at that Time. Such a peculiar Intereſt is often expreſs'd, by confining the Intent and Benefit of our Devotions, upon ſome uncommon Emergencies. Hence this Ceremony is retained, in the Offices of our Church, upon *Three* very ſignal Occaſions. The Conſecrating Men to God's immediate Service by Holy Orders: The Abſolution of the Sick, upon particular Confeſſion and Requeſt: And this of Confirming thoſe, who publickly own, and take upon themſelves, the Obligations of their Baptiſm. Which Laſt now under Conſideration may, from what hath been already delivered upon it, ſufficiently appear to be a Caſe, proper for this ſignificant Ceremony, as well as the *Two* Former.

Gen. xlviii.

2. Another Meaning of this Rite there is, importing ſome more than ordinary Authority (and that generally of a ſpiritual Kind) in the Perſons impowered to uſe it. Thus *Jacob* bleſſed *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, not as a Parent only, but a Prophet. *Moſes* laid Hands on *Joſhua*, by expreſs Command from God, and as Supreme Miniſter over his People. The Apoſtles acted by Delegation from Chriſt. He alone acted by a Power paramount and inherent. When he gave this Spirit, he gave of his own, and therefore he diſpenſes it with Authority. For he *breathed* on his Apoſtles, and ſaid, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*: A Ceremony moſt abſurd for any beſide Himſelf. The Reſt, by praying, acknowledge their Authority not to be *Supreme*, though Laying on of Hands with Prayer implies it to be *Sacred*. This is however an Intimation, that, through the Faithfulneſs of Him that made it, the Promiſe is as ſure to the regular Uſe of theſe Means; as if They, who in virtue of their high Function aſk it, had themſelves Power to give it.

John xx. 22.

I ſpeak

I ſpeak herein the manifeſt Senſe of our Church, which puts theſe Words into the Mouths of her Biſhops: *Almighty and everlaſting God, who makeſt us both to will and to do thoſe Things, that be good and acceptable unto thy Divine Majeſty: We make our humble Supplications unto thee for theſe thy Servants; upon whom (after the Example of thy Holy Apoſtles) we have now laid our Hands, to certify them (by this Sign) of thy Favour and gracious Goodneſs toward them*, &c. This is ſuch a Mixture of Humility and Faith, as well agrees with the pureſt and moſt primitive Times. This is a decent and a neceſſary Recognition, due to the Honour of that God and Saviour, who is the Fountain of all Goodneſs and Grace. Such as, we have great Reaſon to be confident, will make way for that, which is the

IV. *Fourth* and *Laſt* Obſervation propoſed, The Efficacy of theſe Means, and the Succeſs we are allowed to hope for, in the Caſe of all Chriſtians, who ſhall regularly and devoutly apply themſelves to God, in the Uſe of them.

Of this we may collect ſomewhat for our Comfort, from what was juſt now ſpoken upon the Topick of Prayer. But, beſides the Encouragement common to other Addreſſes for God's Grace, I reckon there are Some peculiar to This I am now treating of. Two it ſhall ſuffice at preſent to mention; One with Regard to the Inſtitution, Another, to the End of it.

1. Since this is a Rite, practiſed by the Apoſtles, and from Them continued down to Us; we may fairly conclude it to be an Inſtance of Duty and Worſhip, every Way agreeable to the Will of God. The firſt Inſtitutors of it acted by the Dictates of the Holy Ghoſt; and were by him inſtructed what to do, and what to appoint, both for the preſent Age, and for Poſterity. So that their Inſtitutions are indeed God's Inſtitutions. And it were very abſurd to imagine, that They, who lived with, and next them, ſhould not diſtinguiſh what Services were temporary, and limited to ſome certain

certain State of Chriſtianity; and what were ſtanding Ordinances, calculated for all Ages and Conditions of it. The Scripture then, by giving Evidence of this Practice, proves it to be no Invention of Superſtitious Men. And the Hiſtory of the Church, by teſtifying the Continuance of it, after the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit ceaſed, ſhews it to have had a View farther than thoſe Gifts only: and, in the unanimous Conſent of ſucceeding Ages, to have been a Rite, of ſingular Acceptance with Almighty God, and of general Uſe to the Souls of Men.

And, if the Caſe ſtands thus, the Queſtion of its Efficacy is determined to our Hand. For *this* (ſays St. *John*) *is the Confidence that we have in Him, that, if we aſk any Thing according to his Will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatſoever we aſk, we know that we have the Petitions that we deſired of him.* From hence it follows, that the Diſappointment of our Prayers is always from ourſelves: Owing to ſome Diſagreement between our Requeſts and the Will of God; otherwiſe they always ſucceed according to our Wiſhes. If then God always grant, when we aſk as he approves, will he not much more grant, when we aſk as he appoints? Then to deny, were to fruſtrate his own Ordinance; to overturn the Foundation of Hope, which his own Hand hath laid; and to mock that Confidence and Application, which his own Word hath both commanded as a Duty, and extolled as a Virtue. 1 John v. 14, 15.

2. The other Conſideration, relating to the End of this Rite, is two-fold: As it concerns Men, Either in the Quality of private Chriſtians, or Members of Chriſt's Body, the Church.

The End it aims at in private Chriſtians, is a publick Recognition of, and ſolemn Undertaking for, the Vows made in Baptiſm. And, what can more conduce to the Honour of God, and the Increaſe of true

Religion, than for all to ratify, with that deliberate Choice, which mature Years and Judgment are qualified to make, those Debts and Obligations, for which the Charity of the Church did before accept of a Security, given by other Hands on their Behalf? With those Sureties the Office of Baptism contracts, till the *Infant come of Age to take* this *upon himself*; for this the Catechism was intended as a Qualification, by inculcating the Substance of the Christian Religion. For so the very Title of it declares, *A Catechism, that is to say, an Instruction to be learned of every Person, before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop.* For bringing Children hither the Sureties are required to take Care, in the concluding Admonition at Baptism, and in the third Rubrick after the Catechism. The whole Confirmation Service turns upon this; and the Rubrick after it forbids the admitting any to the Lord's Supper, who are not either actually confirmed, or ready and desirous to be confirmed. The Reasonableness and Wisdom of all which Appointments appear from hence; That the Church esteems the Baptizing of Infants a Work of Piety and great Charity: That Baptism is a Covenant between two Parties, God and the Person: That God contracts by his Minister and the Church; but the Infant by Sureties, because not in a Condition of transacting for himself. But, when he arrives at such a Condition, and the Necessity of Bondsmen ceases; then the only Way to secure himself, is to make the Covenant his own Act and Deed. And He, who is not willing to this, what does he in effect, but, in all Construction of Reason and Common Sense, disclaim and disannul, and cut himself off from, all Benefits by that Covenant intended for? And sure, to such unthankful, careless, lost Wretches, the Church does very justly deny those Privileges of higher and more perfect Communion, which they alone are fit to rejoice in, who are

not

not only content to be called, but think it their Happineſs really to be, and to live like, Chriſtians.

Let not any therefore, who come to this ſolemn Rite in that good Diſpoſition of Mind, entertain the leaſt Diſtruſt or Doubt of its Efficacy. We are aſſured, by our Bleſſed Lord's own Words, That *To him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance*; And that *Thoſe who come to Chriſt, he will in no wiſe caſt out*; And again, by God the Father, that *Them who honour him He will honour.* But where ſhall we find an Inſtance of approaching the Father and Saviour of Men, more likely to engage his Favour, than This? Is it not, in our Saviour's Senſe, to *have*, when we are ready to employ the Graces already beſtowed, and come panting and gaſping for more? And ſhall not a Soul thus *hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs, be filled?* Is it not to *come to Chriſt*, when we expreſs holy Reſolutions, in the ſolemneſt Manner that can be, by devoting ourſelves entirely to his Service all the Days of our Life? and can it ſtand with the Truth of God, that ſuch Comers ſhould be caſt out? Is it not to honour him and his Goſpel, when we publickly thank him for the Conditions made for us in our Infancy, when we ſatisfy the World, that we have conſidered the Nature of our Duty, and eſteem our Faith reaſonable, and our Service Freedom? That therefore we will now no longer be Chriſtians, by Neceſſity or Chance, but by Deliberation and Choice, and in full Conviction of the Excellence and Advantages, belonging to that Character? Hence 'tis, we offer to contract afreſh, bid Battle to our ſpiritual Adverſaries, and ſhew, that as we are not aſhamed of what was done for us before, ſo we are determined never to retract what is doing now. If any Action in a Man's Life could deſerve Grace, one might venture to ſay, this would be it. But Grace muſt ſtill be Grace, and

Matth. xiii. 12. John vi. 37. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Matth. v. 6.

cannot become a Debt to our beſt Works. However, that which cannot challenge it, will not fail to incline it, as effectually, as ſeaſonably, as if we had it at our own Diſpoſal.

2. The End of Confirmation concerns Men, as Members of the Church; becauſe this is to teſtify our Unity and Fellowſhip with the Reſt of our Chriſtian Brethren. 'Twas formerly cuſtomary for every new Biſhop, to give publick Satisfaction of his being Orthodox, by ſending a Summary of his Faith to all the principal Sees. Thus all under his Inſpection were ſecured, that, by holding with one ſo owned and approved, they held Communion with all the Chriſtian Churches. The ſame is virtually done in all our Conſecrations at this Day; where all Perſons are not allowed only, but invited, to challenge the Party propounded: On which Occaſion Silence is conſtrued Approbation. Hence the Mark of Unity, or Schiſm, hath been, that of Men holding or breaking Communion, with the Biſhops of their reſpective Dioceſes; and Their Buſineſs it is, to approve every Man before his Admiſſion into the Church. Now although the Rule of Charity take Place for Infants, ſo long as they are proper Objects of Charity; yet when, by Age and Underſtanding, they ceaſe any longer to be ſuch, Theſe alſo come to be approved perſonally, at their Confirmation. In Perſons Adult this is done at their firſt Entrance by Baptiſm; for no ſuch, by our Rubrick, is to be baptized, without leave firſt obtained from the Biſhop; and till He, or ſome other appointed by Him, be ſatisfied, that the Party, ſo deſiring Baptiſm, be duly qualified to receive it. And this Appointment, by the Way, ſhews, that Perſons before Confirmation (as not yet arrived to a completer Membership) are juſtly refuſed the Holy Table, except their own Deſires ſupply the Defect of the Thing itſelf. In which Caſe, being in no Fault, a Perſon ought not to ſuffer, for want of an Opportunity not in his Power

to

to have. This again ſhews why common Prieſts cannot be ſo proper Inſtruments of Confirmation; becauſe the Keys are not veſted in them, nor hath the Church made them her Judges, who are to be kept out of, and who let in to Memberſhip. The Completing hereof is very fitly reſerved, as a Prerogative due to their Character, with whom the Cenſures are lodged; and ought to increaſe our Reverence for a Rite, which hath ever been reputed worthy to ſtand as a Mark of Diſtinction, between the Epiſcopal and Inferior Orders. Now, to underſtand the Efficacy of Confirmation, as conſequent upon this State of the Caſe, it muſt be remembered, that the Promiſes of Grace belong to us, only as Members of Chriſt's Body the Church, united in him the Head. He is the Vine, We the Branches; and 'tis his own Inference, that we partake of the Sap, only while we are joined to the Tree. If therefore we refuſe to be incorporated, or if we either cut, or ſuffer ourſelves to drop away from the Stock; we loſe all Title to his cheriſhing Influences, and are become dry and withered Wood. Now the Rite I have been ſpeaking of, declares our regular Communion with our own particular Church. Thus it ſecures our perfect Unity with all good and ſound Chriſtians, and fixes us in Chriſt. And then we are ſafe; For St. *Paul* aſſigns falling away, to *not holding the Head, from which all the Body, by Joints and Bands, having Nouriſhment miniſtered and knit together, is increaſed with the Increaſe of God.*

John xv. 4.

Coloſſ. ii. 19.

My Enlargement on this Subject hath been more than was intended; I wiſh it may be as much as is neceſſary. But the beſt Expedient for enabling this Ordinance to prevail, and to keep up its Eſteem, will be, for the Fathers of the Church to adminiſter ſo holy and important a Service, with Frequency and Authority; for the People to attend, and bring thoſe they ſtand engaged for to it, with Diligence and a

Devout Senſe of their Duty, and of the Benefits accompanying it; and for All, who have already diſcharged this Part, to live ſo mindful of the ſolemn Engagements here repeated and ratified, and in ſo conſcientious an Adherence to thoſe Spiritual Fathers, whoſe Miniſtry God makes uſe of, for conveying his Spirit to them; that the Holineſs of their Lives, the Peace of the Church, and the paternal Care and Affection of its Governors, may prove, that this Grace hath not been received in vain, but that God is in them of a Truth. And may he grant to all his Servants *Strength to withſtand the Temptations of the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, and with pure Hearts and Minds to follow him, the only God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

Coll. 18 *Sunday after* Trinity.

TUESDAY *in* WHITSUN WEEK.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

St. John x. 1.

1. I tell you Phariſees, who oppoſe my Doctrine, and blaſpheme my Miracles, that whoever ſets up for the Meſſiah, or, without regular Commiſſion, preſumes to govern and teach the People, he comes to do Miſchief, and to make Havock of, not to feed and profit, the Sheep.

Ch. ix. 40.

1. *VERILY, verily, I ſay unto you, He that entereth not in by the Door into the Sheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other Way, the ſame is a Thief and a Robber.*

2. But he that comes by God's Appointment, is the true Shepherd.

2. *But he that entereth in by the Door, is the Shepherd of the Sheep.*

3. Him God calls to this Office, and his faithful Servants obey him, and he is diligent and conſcientious in the Diſcharge of his Duty.

3. *To him the Porter openeth; and the Sheep hear his Voice, and he calleth his own Sheep by Name, and leadeth them out.*

4. *And*

4. *And when he putteth forth his own Sheep, he goeth before them, and the Sheep follow him: For they know his Voice.*

4. He (according to the Cuſtom of Shepherds in that Country) leads his Flock, (by his Example) and good Men imitate and hearken unto him.

5. *And a Stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: For they know not the Voice of Strangers.*

5. But they ſuſpect ſuch as come and intrude upon them.

6. *This Parable ſpake Jeſus unto them: But they underſtood not what Things they were which he ſpake unto them.*

6. This was intended for a Reproof to the Phariſees, but they did not underſtand what thoſe Alluſions meant.

7. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, I am the Door of the Sheep.*

7. Jeſus therefore (upon mention of the Fold and the Door) took Occaſion to compare himſelf to that Door, it being by Faith in him only, that Men can come to God.

8. *All that ever came before me are Thieves and Robbers: But the Sheep did not hear them.*

8. All therefore (ſays he) that pretended to be the Chriſt, or oppoſe me who alone am ſo, are——

9. *I am the Door: By me if any Man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and ſhall go in and out, and find Paſture.*

9. It is by me alone, that the Spiritual Sheep can be ſafe, or fed to eternal Life.

10. *The Thief cometh not but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy: I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

10. The falſe Teachers intend nothing but to make a Prey of the People: I come for their infinite Benefit and Advantage, and ſo approve myſelf a true Teacher.

COMMENT.

THIS Goſpel is a Continuance of our Lord's Reproofs to the Phariſees, whoſe unreaſonable Severity to the Man born blind had given him moſt juſt Provocation. He, for acknowledging *Jeſus* to be the Author of his Sight, ſo miraculouſly reſtored, and drawing the Inference naturally reſulting from thence, that a Perſon, who could work ſuch Wonders, muſt needs be a Prophet ſent from God; was, for this Gratitude and good Reaſoning, caſt out of the Synagogue. Hence our Lord took Occaſion to reprove that Vanity and Scorn, wherewith the then Teachers and Rulers of the *Jewiſh* People treated him and exalted themſelves. The mighty Illuminations they pretended to, he allows to be no better than Darkneſs and Blindneſs. And this, he tells them, by being affected and wilful, exceedingly aggravated their Guilt. For they were therefore Blind, becauſe, in deſpight of all Perſuaſion to the contrary, they continued to ſhut their Eyes againſt that Light, which he had brought into the World.

Ch. ix. 23, &c.

Ver. 24, &c.

Ver. 34.

Ver. 39.

Hence he proceeds to ſhew, that, ſo long as they did ſo, Matters were not poſſible to be amended with them. In regard that Light, which he came to diffuſe, was the only true and ſaving Light. For the better Illuſtration whereof, he turns the Metaphor, and, by the Compariſons of a Shepherd and a Door, argues, that Salvation was to be obtained by Him alone: and, that He approved himſelf the faithful and true Shepherd, as well by the Manner of entering the Fold, as by his Behaviour in it.

The Reaſons of our Lord's taking upon him the Title of Shepherd, and of comparing his Diſciples to Sheep, have been conſidered in a former Diſcourſe. The Arguments, whereby

Goſp. for 2 Sund. after Eaſter.

whereby he juſtifies his Claim to that Title, are *Two*; *Firſt, his coming in by the Door*; that is, having a full Authority rightfully committed to him: and *Secondly, coming that his Sheep might have Life*, that is executing his Miniſtry, for the real Benefit of the Flock committed to his Care. Had he wanted the Former, he had not been a Shepherd; and had he been defective in the Latter, he had not been a good Shepherd, nor anſwered the Intents and Purpoſes of that Character and Office.

Ver. 2.

Ver. 10.

Again, when our Lord condeſcends to the Reſemblance of a *Door*; He does in Effect ſay that of himſelf here, which he is pleaſed, in other Terms much of the like Significance, to declare in another Chapter of this Goſpel: *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no Man cometh unto the Father but by me.* The ſame in Senſe, which St. *Peter, filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, aſſerts before the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim*, that *Jeſus of Nazareth is the Stone which was ſet at nought by thoſe Builders, which is become the Head of the Corner; neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* In Agreement hereunto it is, that Faith in Him is ſo often and ſo earneſtly preſs'd, as the neceſſary Condition of Salvation: And that, when he mentions his being *given*, as the moſt eminent Inſtance of God's *Love to the World*, he adds this Reſtriction, as to the Benefit and Efficacy of the Gift, *that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.* From hence, I conceive, the Inference is juſt and unavoidable; that They, who will not believe in him, can have no Ground to hope for everlaſting Life, but are in a deſperate and loſt Condition. God hath made no Proviſion, that we know of, for the Reſcue of any Men out of the Condemnation which Guilt involves them in, to whom the Merits of this Saviour are not applied. I ſay, *none that*

Chap. xiv. 6.

Acts iv. 8, 11, 12.

John iii. 16.

we know of, becauſe the Scripture hath no where declared any Method for applying thoſe Merits except that of *Faith in his Blood, whom God hath* thus *ſet forth to be a Propitiation.*

Rom. iii. 25.

This I take to be the main Subſtance and Deſign of the Scripture now before us; which we ſhall probably be better able to underſtand, and to profit ourſelves of, by ſome few Remarks now about to be made from it.

1. *Firſt*, By what hath been delivered concerning the Occaſion of theſe Words, we are led into the true Meaning of that Paſſage, *All that ever came before me are Thieves and Robbers*; *viz.* That is, muſt mean all ſuch, as come in Oppoſition to our Bleſſed Saviour, and preached up ſuch Doctrines, as hinder Men from believing on him, by ſupporting them in a falſe Dependance of being ſaved, either without any *Meſſias* at all, or by any other *Meſſias*. This was the Caſe of thoſe Scribes and Phariſees, who, with ſo blind and malicious a Zeal, ſeduced the People at that Time, and obſtructed the Succeſs of our Lord's Labours among them: Who taught Men to rely upon their own corrupt Traditions, or to reſt in the *Carnal Commandment*, the external Obſervances of the Ritual Law; without due Regard to the inward Purity virtually contained in it, or without that Perfection and Accompliſhment of the Law in him, which the figurative Parts of his Inſtitution looked forward at, as their principal End and View. This was the Caſe of thoſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, who about that Time deluded great Multitudes of credulous Followers. But it muſt by no means be ſuppoſed to be the Character of the *Jewiſh* Teachers in general, before our bleſſed Lord's Appearance in the Fleſh: For theſe were many of them expreſsly ſent by God, received their Inſtructions immediately from him, and *ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*. And for the Reſt, who did not act under ſuch an extraordinary Influence; ſo far as they taught the Law pure and genuine, they took the true

Ver. 8.

2 Pet. i, 21.

Method for preparing and diſpoſing Men to believe in Chriſt; and did all, that the Condition of that Time would bear, for advancing his Kingdom and the Glory of it. They laid the Foundations of that very Faith, which, *in the Fulneſs of Time*, ſhould have more clear Revelations, to finiſh and bring it to a juſt Perfection. In ſhort, of theſe *Thieves and Robbers* our Lord adds, that the *Sheep did not hear them.* And this, by way of Commendation to thoſe Sheep, who ſo prudently and conſcientiouſly ſtood upon their Guard. But *Moſes* and the Prophets he frequently reproves the *Jews* for not hearkening to; Nay he imputes their Infidelity and Obſtinacy againſt him and his Doctrine, to not ſearching the ancient Scriptures, which every where teſtified of Him. So exceeding vain is the Defence, which ſome ancient Hereticks ſought from this Paſſage, for their blaſphemous Notion, of the Law and Goſpel being dictated and inſtituted by two different Spirits, the Former by an Evil, the Latter by a Good Being; and who thereupon rejected the *Old Teſtament* entirely.

John v. 39, 45, &c.

Manichees.

2. From hence it is eaſy to determine, what is the *Sheepfold* alluded to by our Lord; even the Church of God and Chriſt. Not that only, which, ſince the Publication of his Goſpel, is ſpread over the Face of the whole Earth: But that, which had a Being ever ſince the World began; and will continue, as long as the World ſhall have any Being. This I have formerly had Occaſion to ſhew, is One and the ſame; though like one and the ſame Man, differing from itſelf in point of Age, and Proportion, and ſome other Circumſtances. But ſtill the Subſtance and Nature of it was the ſame, *Jeſus Chriſt*: Still the Condition of Salvation was the ſame, *Faith* in that *Jeſus*. Faith, more or leſs explicit and diſtinct, as the Revelations afforded to Mankind were ſo: as Faith in a Saviour to come, or in one already come, ſhewed the ſame

See Epiſt. S. aft. Chriſtmas.

Epiſt. for Chriſtmas-Day.

ſame Object under different Views; and rendered Prediction, or Fact, the Motive and Ground of Perſuaſion. This is the Fold, into which no Man enters but by Him: and thus we are to underſtand his being the *Door* to it. This is the happy Incloſure, where we may depend upon Life and Safety, Paſture and Plenty. All Schemes of lean Morality, and every fantaſtical Expedient, ſet up as oppoſite to, or ſufficient without, Faith in Chriſt, will miſerably deceive the fond Men that truſt to them. They, inſtead of the good Things they imagined themſelves filled with, ſhall at laſt find nothing in their Hands, but Deluſion and ſad Remorſe; and envy the once deſpiſed Fooliſhneſs of Chriſtian Preaching and Believing.

5. If *Jeſus Chriſt* be the *Door*, and his Church the *Sheepfold*, and Faith the Means of entering by that *Door* into this *Fold*; then ſurely no Faith can let us in but only that, which the Scriptures have delivered to us. Conſequently, Men cannot be at Liberty, to garble, and pick, and cull, and believe what they conceive themſelves able to account for, and reject what is myſterious, upon a Pretence of being contrary to, becauſe they feel it to be above, their Reaſon. For this in Effect would be, not embracing a Religion delivered by God, but chuſing one framed by our own ſelves: And in good Truth it is not believing, but dictating. It is very obſervable therefore, that ſuch a Profeſſion of Faith as I am pleading for, is required of every Perſon in the Covenant of Baptiſm. Which plainly ſhews, upon what Terms we are accepted, and how indiſpenſably neceſſary to Salvation, that Faith is which ſo many now are not aſhamed to expoſe: Since into this Fold we cannot ſet one Foot without it, and, out of this Fold (ordinarily ſpeaking) as of old out of the Ark, is nothing but Miſery and Deſtruction.

4. In the circumſtantial Parts of the Allegory now before us, our Lord hath intimated to us the Qualifications of a good Shepherd. *That* he muſt be diligent

gent thoroughly to know his Flock, to conſider their ſeveral Wants and Infirmities, and accommodate himſelf ſeaſonably and properly to each of them; which we may very well ſuppoſe implied, in that Expreſſion of *calling his own Sheep by Name*. *That* he muſt be careful not only to inſtruct, and exhort, and encourage them, by ſound Doctrine, and ſeaſonable Admonitions, but alſo to guide and excite them by the Piety of his Example: For thus ſome have underſtood *leading out his own Sheep*, and *going before them*. *That* his main View muſt be, the Benefit of his People, the Welfare and Salvation of their Souls, the preſerving them from the Rapine and Violence of a Foe, always ready to devour them: In a Word, He muſt eſteem his own Wealth and Happineſs to conſiſt, chiefly in the bettering of Their Condition; not regarding the Milk and the Fleece only, nor undertaking this Charge only, or principally, for his own private Advantage. All this may very well be underſtood by the 10th Verſe, *The Thief cometh not but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy: I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly*. Once more, He is ſuch a one, as enters upon this Office, by a regular Call and Miſſion, as let into the Fold by thoſe, who are entruſted to keep the Door; who, in the perſonal Abſence of the Chief Shepherd, have Commiſſion to act for and under him: So that what They do according to the Powers received from Him, He is eſteemed the Doer of; and All whom They employ, are owned as his Servants and Stewards. Theſe are the only *Shepherds, that enter by the Door*, and to whom *the Porter openeth*: The reſt *climb up ſome other Way*. And ſuch as do ſo, are here declared, by the Maſter of the Flock, to be no better than *Thieves and Robbers*. But of this more at large elſewhere.

Goſp. 1 S. *after* Eaſter, 8 *Sun. after* Trinity.

5. Once again. As theſe Parabolical Expreſſions hint the Duties of the Shepherd, ſo they do likewiſe

thoſe

thoſe of the Sheep. Such are Attention and Diligence to get Inſtruction, Application to their proper Buſineſs, adhering ſtedfaſtly to their regular Paſtor, imitating the good Example he ſets them, *Enduring ſound Doctrine*, not *having itching Ears*, nor *heaping to themſelves Teachers*; but being conſtantly upon their Guard againſt all Seducers, and ſuſpecting the wicked Deſigns of any, who attempt to draw them off from a regular Communion with Him, to whoſe Care the Laws of God and Man have committed their Souls. All which ſome Interpreters have collected from hence, that they are called the rightful Shepherd's *own Sheep*, that *they follow him*, becauſe *they know his Voice*; that *a Stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the Voice of Strangers.*

2 Tim. iv. 3.

Ver. 4, 5.

Theſe Remarks I the rather inſiſt upon, becauſe they ſeem, at this Time eſpecially, proper Conſiderations both for Prieſt and People. A fit Introduction for the *Ember* Faſt: As well for thoſe, who are now about to be *ordained to any Holy Function*; that They may learn from hence the Greatneſs of the Obligation lying on them, *both for their Life and Doctrine to ſet forth the Glory of God, and ſet forward the Salvation of all Men:* As for them, to whom they ſhall be ſent; that They may take good Heed to thoſe Means of Edification and Salvation, which a faithful Miniſtry puts into their Hands, that they may preſerve the Order and Unity of the Church, and at once ſecure the Peace of the Publick, and that of their own Conſciences. Which God give Prieſt and People Grace to do, for his Sake, whoſe *precious Blood* was ſhed to *purchaſe* to his Father *an univerſal* Church, *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*. Amen.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy Servants Grace, by the Confession of a true Faith to acknowledge the Glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the Power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this Faith, and evermore defend us from all Adversities, who livest and reignest one God, World without End. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Rev. iv. 1.

1. *AFter this I looked, and behold a Door was opened in Heaven; and the first Voice which I heard, was as it were of a Trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee Things which must be hereafter.*

2. *And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold a Throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the Throne.*

3. *And he that sat, was to look upon like a Jasper, and a Sardine Stone: and there was a Rainbow round about the Throne, in Sight like unto an Emerald.*

4. *And round about the Throne were four and twenty Seats: and upon the Seats I saw four and twenty Elders sitting, cloathed in white Raiment; and they had on their Heads Crowns of Gold.*

5. *And out of the Throne proceeded Lightnings †, and Thundrings, and Voices; and there were seven Lamps of Fire burning before the Throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. I had afterwards another Vision, representing Heaven open, and a Voice, calling loudly to me, to attend to the strange and important Events, which God was now about to give me a Foresight of.

2. Presently I saw God the Father, sitting in Majesty upon a Throne.

3. In such Appearances as denoted his Power and Justice, and Mercy, and the Faithfulness of his Covenant to Mankind.

4. He was surrounded with blessed Spirits, seated and habited, like the Elders or Bishops of the Church about Jerusalem, sitting with the Bishops of that City in Council.

5. † Importing Threatnings of God's fierce Anger and Vengeance against the Jews.

6. † Denoting the People of *Iſrael*, as the Glaſs does their Actions and Conſciences, clearly ſeen through by this great Judge. And there were likewiſe the Appearances of four Figures, which uſed to be pourtrayed in the Standards of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, ſignifying four Apoſtles, and that all the People ſhould be gathered unto their Enſigns by the Profeſſion of the Goſpel. And theſe being full of Eyes intimated, that the Perſons ſignified by them were endued with the Gift of Prophecy, and all manner of neceſſary Gifts and Illuminations of the Holy Ghoſt.

6. *And before the Throne there was a Sea of* † *Glaſs like unto Cryſtal: and in the Midſt of the Throne, and round about the Throne, were four Beaſts full of Eyes before and behind.*

7. *And the firſt Beaſt was like a Lion, and the ſecond Beaſt like a Calf, and the third Beaſt had a Face as a Man, and the fourth Beaſt was like a flying Eagle.*

8. Theſe had ſix Wings, denoting their Zeal and Readineſs to propagate the Goſpel; and the Number of their Eyes denoted their perfect Knowledge of the Types and Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and their Foreknowledge of momentous Events under the New. And they are indefatigable in giving Honour to the Bleſſed Trinity of Perſons, in the One Omnipotent and Eternal Godhead.

8. *And the four Beaſts had each of them ſix Wings about him, and they were full of Eyes within; and they reſt not Day and Night; ſaying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

9. *And when thoſe Beaſts give Glory, and Honour, and Thanks to him that ſat on the Throne, who liveth for ever and ever,*

10. *The four and twenty Elders fall down before Him that ſat on the Throne, and worſhip him, that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne, ſaying:*

11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power: for thou haſt created all Things, and for thy Pleaſure they are, and were created.*

TRINITY SUNDAY.

The GOSPEL.

St. John iii. 1.

1. *THERE was a Man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a Ruler of the Jews.*

2. *The same came to Jesus by Night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God: for no Man can do these Miracles, that thou doest, except God be with him.*

PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. *Nicodemus*, who privately believed, not caring to offend the rest of his Brethren the *Pharisees* and Rulers, desired to have a private Conference with *Jesus*, and therefore came to him by Night. Thus concealed, he began with this ingenuous Acknowledgement, that the Miracles *Jesus* had done were, to Him, a sufficient Evidence of his Divine Authority and Mission.

3. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

3. Hereupon our Lord (probably moved by some Enquiries from *Nicodemus*, concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Qualifications for entering into it) told him, that a new Birth was necessary for that Purpose.

4. *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a Man be born when he is old? can he enter a second Time into his Mother's Womb, and be born?*

4. This *Nicodemus* understood in a gross and literal Sense, and thereupon objected, How, &c.

5. *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

5. This Misapprehension our Lord corrected, by acquainting him, that the washing of Water upon the Outward, and the Sanctification of the Holy Ghost in the Inward Man, effected the Birth he spoke of.

6. *That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.*

6. For all Births answer to the Principle that causes them; and therefore as carnal Births are effected by a fleshly, so the spiritual Birth must be effected by a Spirit, as its vital Principle.

7, 8. And

7, 8. And though the Cauſe itſelf, and the Manner of its Operation cannot be diſcerned, yet it is ſufficient in this Caſe, that the Effects are manifeſtly diſcernible, which is illuſtrated by an Inſtance taken from the Wind in particular.

7. *Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again.*

8. *The Wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the Sound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

9. *Nicodemus anſwered and ſaid unto him, How can theſe Things be?*

10. *Jeſus* reproved his Slowneſs of Apprehenſion, who knew it cuſtomary with the *Jews* to make Proſelytes by Baptiſm, and to call them New Men, when thus entered into the *Jewiſh* Church.

10. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou a Maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe Things?*

11, 12. What I now ſay, ſaid he, is ſufficiently confirmed by my Miracles; but I have yet more myſterious Truths to reveal, and if you find Difficulty in this, how will you aſſent to thoſe more ſublime Matters, which I am about to diſcover?

11. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, We ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen: and ye receive not our witneſs.*

12. *If I have told you earthly Things, and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly Things?*

13. Know then that I, the Son of Man, according to my Human Nature, have a more perfect Knowledge of the Will of God, than any other Prophet ever had; and I came from thence, as no other ever did: even ſo as (in reſpect of my Divine Nature) to be in Heaven, at this very Inſtant, that I am converſing with you upon Earth;

13. *And no Man hath aſcended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven.*

14. And I muſt be lifted up on a Croſs, and die an ignominious Death; a Type whereof the Brazen Serpent was:

14. *And as Moſes lifted up the Serpent, in the Wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted up:*

15. And the Effect will correſpond to it: For as all, that looked up to That, were healed of their Plague; ſo all that look up to me by the Eye of Faith, ſhall be releaſed from the Guilt of their Sins, and be everlaſtingly happy in another World.

15. *That whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal Life.*

COMMENT.

THE Solemn Feſtivals, which, in the foregoing Parts of this Treatiſe, have propounded to our Conſideration the myſterious Work of Man's Redemption, and the ſeveral Steps taken to accompliſh it, do naturally lead us up to, and at laſt conclude with, that of the preſent Day. The Incarnation and Nativity, the Paſſion and Reſurrection of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, demonſtrate how great Things the *Son* of God hath condeſcended to do for us. The miraculous Powers, with which the firſt Diſciples were endued, and the ſanctifying Graces, with which all the Faithful are aſſiſted, do prove, how great, and how neceſſary a Part the *Holy Spirit* bore in this Work, both for publiſhing the Salvation of the World, and for rendring it effectual. And all agree in repreſenting to us the ineſtimable love of the *Father*, by whom that *Son* was ſent, and that *Spirit* ſo wonderfully and ſo plentifully ſhed abroad. Moſt juſtly therefore, after ſuch Informations, how fit a Subject this is for our Wonder and Adoration, does the Church to-day call upon us to celebrate the Myſtery of thoſe *Three* Perſons in the Unity of the Godhead; each of whom hath ſo kindly, and ſo largely, contributed to this United and Stupendous Act of Mercy, upon which the whole of all our Hopes and Happineſs depends.

To this Inſtance of Piety and Devotion we are excited, by the Portion of Scripture appointed for the Epiſtle. Wherein the Angels and Bleſſed Spirits, which pay their conſtant Attendance about the Throne of the Majeſty on high, are repreſented to St. *John*, as with moſt awful and profound Reverence, acknowledging and worſhipping the Three Holies, which are One Eternal and Almighty Lord God. A fit Example for the Church Militant on Earth to follow; becauſe, in ſo doing, they do not only copy after, but,

as it were, anticipate, the conſtant Employment of the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

To the Contemplation of this Myſtery we are likewiſe invited, by the Goſpel for this Day. In which is made expreſs and diſtinct mention, Of God the Father, by whoſe Power and immediate Preſence with *Jeſus*, the Miracles atteſting to his Divine Authority, were wrought: Of God the Son, who declares himſelf to have come down from Heaven, and even to be in Heaven at the Inſtant of converſing with *Nicodemus* upon Earth: And of that Holy Spirit, whoſe prolific Operation upon the Waters of Baptiſm effects the new and Spiritual, as of old it did the Natural Creation, when moving upon the Face of the yet unform'd Deep: and whoſe ſanctifying Graces act powerfully, tho' often undiſcernibly, in changing the Minds of Men.

Ver. 2.

Ver. 13.

Ver. 5, 6.

Ver. 7, 8.

But as the Bleſſed Spirits above, are our Pattern for acknowledging this myſterious Truth, ſo are they for the Manner of contemplating it. Like them, we ſhould fall down before the Throne, and with humble Wonder adore a Depth which we cannot penetrate. In regard therefore, this is a Doctrine, intirely owing to Divine Revelation; the ſafeſt and moſt becoming Method of treating it will be, to ſhew thoſe Intimations thought to be given of it under the *Old Teſtament*, and then the clearer Diſcoveries made of it in the *New*. From both which, it will afterwards be natural and eaſy to infer the Reaſonableneſs of embracing it, as a neceſſary Article of Faith.

1. The Intimations, ſuppoſed to be given of this Doctrine under the *Old Teſtament*, are ſuch as follow.

The frequent Mention of God, by a Name in the Plural Number with a Verb Singular. Of which ſome learned *Jews* obſerve, that it is a Warning not to believe more Gods than One: and yet at the ſame Time they confeſs that were it not thus written, it could not

not be lawful for Men to expreſs themſelves after that Manner. The Conſequence they apprehend from hence, holds indeed againſt a Plurality of Gods, but is of no weight at all againſt a Plurality of Perſons in One only True God.

The ſeveral Texts wherein God ſpeaks, as it were in Conſultation and Concert, *Let us make Man in our own Image after our Likeneſs: The Man is become as one of us: Let us go down and confound their Speech*; *Whom ſhall I ſend, and Who ſhall go for us?* and the like.

Gen. i. 26.
—— iii. 22.
—— xi. 7.
Iſai. vi. 8.

The Paſſages, which name God, as ſuſtaining ſeveral Capacities, in one and the ſame Sentence. Such is that, by which our Saviour gravell'd the Scribes and Phariſees, *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right Hand*; And that Other, which makes uſe of the Name *Jehovah* twice, (a Name, acknowledged incommunicable to any but the true God) where we read, that *the Lord rained down Fire upon* Sodom *from the Lord out of Heaven.*

Pſal. cx. 1. Mat. xxii. 42, &c.

Gen. xix. 24.

Such Intimations in particular Manner are thoſe Places, where the Name of God, or any of his Attributes, are thrice repeated; of which kind have been reckoned by ſome, *Deut.* vi. 4. *Pſal.* lxvii. 6, 7. *Jerem.* xxxiii. 2. *Dan.* ix. 19. And eſpecially that Hymn of Praiſe in *Iſai.* vi. repeated in the Epiſtle for this Day, and taken into the daily Services of the Chriſtian Church. But theſe I chuſe to term Intimations: And I am content to lay but little Weight upon them, in a Point of Doctrine, ſo much more manifeſtly aſſerted in the Goſpel, as generally to be allowed a Diſtinction peculiar to Chriſtians. Let us obſerve therefore in the

Te Deum. *Commun. Office.*

II. *Second* Place, What thoſe clear Diſcoveries of this Matter are, which have been made to us under the *New Teſtament.*

In this Argument I am to a conſiderable Degree prevented, by having had Occaſion heretofore to produce ſeveral Paſſages, which not only ſpeak of God the Father, (concerning whom there is in the preſent Queſtion no Diſpute at all) but of the Son, and Holy Spirit alſo, in the ſame Form of Speech as of the Father. In ſuch Terms, I mean, and with ſuch Titles, and with thoſe Properties and Perfections expreſsly attributed to Them, as were moſt falſe, abſurd, and impious, if applied to any other, than to the True God only.

Epiſt. and Goſp. Chriſtm. Day. *Goſp.* Whitſunday.

Referring my Reader back to thoſe Evidences, that each of theſe Perſons by himſelf is God and Lord; I ſhall at preſent confine myſelf to ſome Places, which mention all Three, with ſuch Notes of Diſtinction, as are a ſufficient Indication, that they cannot be God, in One Perſon only. That the Bleſſed Virgin ſhould become a Mother, without any Concurrence of Man, is thus foretold by the Angel, *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee, therefore alſo that Holy Thing which ſhall be born of Thee, ſhall be called the Son of God.* Here are plainly diſtinguiſhed from each other, the *Holy Ghoſt* or *Power* overſhadowing; The *Higheſt*, whoſe *Power* that Spirit is; and the *Holy Thing*, or Perſon, who, becauſe born of a Mother impregnated by that Power Divine, had upon this Account a Right to be *called the Son of God.*

Luke i. 34, 35.

At our Bleſſed Lord's Baptiſm, *the Spirit of God*, we read, *deſcended like a Dove, and reſted upon him*, and *a Voice from Heaven* declared him to be *the beloved Son of God.* Now what can be plainer, than the Diſtinction here, between the *Spirit* deſcending and reſting, the *Father*, whoſe Voice pronounced *Jeſus* his Son, and that *Son* himſelf, whom this *Spirit* reſted upon, and this Voice bore Teſtimony to?

Matt. iii. 16, 17. Luke iii. 21, 22. John i. 32, 33.

The

The ſame is to be ſaid of thoſe Texts in St. *John*'s Goſpel, which we have lately had Occaſion to conſider: *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth.* And, *When the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me.* Here are manifeſtly Acts, and Perſons, and Capacities different, the *Father*, from whom the *Spirit* proceeds, whom the Son prays, and by whom, at the *Son*'s Requeſt, that *Comforter* was given. The *Son* praying the *Father*, ſending the Comforter from the *Father*, and teſtified of by the *Spirit* ſo ſent. And the *Spirit*, prayed for, given by the *Father*, ſent from the *Father* by the *Son*, teſtifying of the *Son*, and *abiding* for ever with thoſe Diſciples, from whom the *Son* had departed.

Joh. xiv. 16, 26. —— xv. 26.

Again. *If the Spirit of Him that raiſed Jeſus from the Dead dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the Dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* St. *Paul*, in this Place, does evidently refer to *Jeſus* the *Son* of God raiſed from the Dead; to the *Spirit* of God, by which he was raiſed; and to him, that raiſed *Jeſus*, and ſhall raiſe all in whom that *Spirit* dwells, becauſe it is his *Spirit*.

Rom. viii. 11.

In the Name of theſe Three Perſons all Nations are to be baptized, as the ſtanding Form and Method of making Men Chriſt's Diſciples. In the Name of theſe Three thoſe Diſciples are ſolemnly bleſſed: And our Congregations, who were firſt admitted Chriſtians, by being *baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, have all the Privileges of that Character implored for them by that Benediction, with which they are daily diſmiſſed, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with us all evermore.*

Mat. xxviii. 19.

2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Mean while I muſt not omit to obſerve, that the Scriptures, which are ſo clear in the Trinity of Perſons, are not in any Point whatſoever more expreſs, than in the Unity of the Godhead. Hence we ſo often read of *One Lord*, *One God*, and *none other but He*, who is therefore ſtyled the *Only True God*. That although to the Heathen there *are that are called Gods many, and Lords many*; yet *to us* Chriſtians *there is but one God, the Father of whom are all Things, and We in Him, and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all Things, and We by Him.* That we are indeed baptized in the Name of *Three*, but ſtill taught, and bound to profeſs *One Lord*, and *One God*, as well as *One Faith*, and *One Baptiſm.* In all which, another Apoſtle aſſures us, there is no Abſurdity or Inconſiſtence, by affirming, that *there be Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and* that *theſe Three are one.* And, what greater Proof can be reaſonably demanded, for a Doctrine of ſo abſtruſe a Nature, ſo remote from our Conception, ſo much above our Comprehenſion, than that *Three* Perſons ſhould be mentioned in Scripture (the only Source of ſupernatural Knowledge) in Terms proper to God alone; that each ſhould have Perfections attributed to him, which are viſibly peculiar to God alone; and yet all this done ſo, as, from more Perſons in the Godhead, to leave no Umbrage for Inferences againſt the Unity of that Godhead notwithſtanding.

Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 32. John xvii. 3.

1 Cor. viii 5, 6.

Eph. iv. 5.

1 John v. 7.

This indeed is a Point neceſſary to be guarded, becauſe the leaving it liable to juſt Objection had defeated one great End of Scripture. For the *Old Teſtament* was intended to bring off the *Jews*, and the *New* to deliver the Gentiles from Idolatry. And that Idolatry did conſiſt, in worſhipping them which *by Nature are no Gods*, not inſtead of, or excluſive to, but beſides and together with, the one Supreme and

True

True God. So that, had not the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, been the One Supreme and True God; thoſe Scriptures, which ſo frequently, ſo ſolemnly, ſo induſtriouſly, and ſo plainly, give to the Son and Holy Spirit the Names and Titles, the Properties and Honours, given to the Father, had taken the ready and moſt effectual Courſe for eſtabliſhing and propagating that very Idolatry, which they were deſigned to ſuppreſs and utterly aboliſh. An Abſurdity, which no Writers of common Senſe and Prudence, much leſs they that wrote by divine Inſpiration, can be ſuppoſed guilty of.

This likewiſe ſhews, that there can be no Need of the many little Shifts, to which ſome Interpreters have had Recourſe, for avoiding the plain and literal Conſtructions of the Texts alledged in Defence of this Doctrine. All Danger poſſible to ariſe from ſuch Conſtruction, being ſufficiently provided againſt, by the many other Texts, which inculcate the Unity of the Godhead. And the Niceties, by which they labour to turn off thoſe, which aſſert more Divine Perſons than One, being too ſubtle for the Generality of People to be Maſters of, to whom the Scripture was meant for a Rule. Men, I conceive, may be much more eaſily brought to underſtand the Conſiſtence of the Word of God with itſelf in this Matter, than to be ſatisfied in the Evaſions and Artifices, by which a Meaning is faſtened upon it, ſo foreign from that common and natural one, which the Expreſſions evidently carry.

Nor, *Laſtly*, does it appear that our Reaſon is affronted by any Contradiction in this Doctrine. For theſe Perſons are no where affirmed to be Three and One in the ſame Reſpect; but One in Subſtance, and Three in the different Manner of having and communicating that Subſtance. One in all Perfections eſſential to the Godhead; Three in their mutual Relations and Capacities. Thus much is revealed; and more

than is revealed of this Matter we cannot know. So much as is revealed we have Reaſon upon that Account to believe; but the main Difficulties, commonly objected in this Caſe, will, when ſtrictly conſidered, found to lie, not ſo much againſt *that which is written*, as againſt the Notions of bold and fanciful Men: Who, not content to *be wiſe according to that which is written*, will needs obtrude upon the World Syſtems of their own, and undertake to explain what they do not underſtand. Nor is the Uſe of Reaſon, within its proper Sphere, at all infringed by this Belief. For, by ſubmitting to Things above it which we cannot comprehend, it does not give up its Right; nor enſlave us to the Degree of believing contrary to our Reaſon, in Things within our Level, which we may and do comprehend.

Since then Scripture is clear in the Truth of this Myſtery, and Reaſon cannot gainſay it: Since this Belief is the diſtinguiſhing Character of Chriſtians, and the Profeſſion of it a neceſſary antecedent Condition of our being ſuch: Since we have devoted ourſelves in Baptiſm, and there promiſed conſtant Homage, and Obedience, and Adoration, to the Trinity in Unity: Let us, in all Humility and Reverence, agree with *Angels*, and all the *Heavenly Powers*, with *Cherubim* and *Seraphim*, with *Apoſtles*, and *Prophets*, and *Martyrs*, and with *the Holy Church throughout all the World*, in *praiſing* and *acknowledging* this *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.* Even *the Father of an infinite Majeſty, His Honourable, True, and only Son*, and *alſo the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter*; Living and reigning one God World without End. *Amen.*

The First SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O GOD, the Strength of all them that put their Truſt in thee; Mercifully accept our Prayers: And, becauſe through the Weakneſs of our mortal Nature, we can do no good Thing without thee, grant us the Help of thy Grace, that in keeping thy Commandments we may pleaſe thee both in Will and Deed, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Pſal. xxvii. 1. —xxxiv. 22. *Philip.* iv. 13. *Rom.* vii. 18—25.

The EPISTLE.

1 *St.* John iv. 7.

7. *BEloved, let us love one another: For Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

8. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love.*

PARAPHRASE.

7. 8. The true Proof of our being God's Children, and having a true Knowledge of his Nature and Will, is Chriſtian Charity; which they who practiſe not, neither belong to God, nor are acquainted with him.

9. *In this was manifeſted the Love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.*

9. How eminently this Love is in God, the ſending his Son for the Salvation of a ſinful World leaves us no room to doubt.

10. *Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.*

10. For of that Love this is one great Enhancement, that it began on his Part, was voluntary and free without any Obligation or Deſert on our Part to incline it.

11. *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another.*

11. And the proper Way to expreſs our Senſe of, and Gratitude for that wonderful Love of God, is Love to one another, and in Imitation of this Pattern, to extend our Love even to thoſe, who do not deſerve it at our Hands.

12. *No Man hath ſeen God at any Time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us.*

12. The Reaſon of this Inference is plain, becauſe God is not in the Compaſs of our good

good Offices; and therefore the only Method left us of expreſſing our Love to him, whom we cannot converſe viſibly with, nor bring any Benefit to, is to love thoſe with whom we do converſe, and who may be the better for us. This is in Effect to do as he did.

13. And this is a Proof that he is with and in us, by the Grace of his Holy Spirit, when our Diſpoſitions and Actions do thus reſemble his.

13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.*

14. Such is the Evidence that we Apoſtles give of having that Spirit, who to our utmoſt Hazard preach Chriſt and his Doctrine, of the Truth whereof we have undoubted Certainty.

14. *And we have ſeen, and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the World.*

15. He that is thus content to adhere to Chriſt, is the Sort of Man, that God is ſpiritually preſent with, and united to.

15. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*

16. For the Ground of this Profeſſion is the Love of God in the Redemption of the World. Love and Goodneſs is his very Nature and Eſſence, and therefore every Chriſtian maintains his myſtical Communion with him, in proportion as he imitates that great Original.

16. *And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us. God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

17. This is the Perfection of our Love, to do Good, when ſure to ſuffer Evil for it; for ſo did Chriſt, and ſo ſhould we, though ſure to meet with the like ill Returns that he did.

17. *Herein is our Love made perfect, that we may have Boldneſs in the Day of Judgment: Becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this World.*

18. True Love will ſtick at nothing, nor be diſcouraged by the Proſpect of any Danger in the Service of the Party beloved: Which to a fearful Man is a continual Rack and Check, and argues that Love to be weak, which hath not yet conquered this uneaſy Paſſion.

18. *There is no Fear in Love; but perfect Love caſteth out Fear: Becauſe Fear hath Torment: He that feareth is not made perfect in Love.*

19. And in all this I am exciting Men to no other Proofs of their Love to Chriſt, than they have already received of his Love to Them. Nay, not ſo much; for his was free and undeſerved, whereas ours is Debt and Gratitude.

19. *We love him; becauſe he firſt loved us.*

20. *If*

20. *If a Man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar: For he who loveth not his Brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?*

20. But let not any Man pretend ſuch Love to Chriſt, who ſhews none to his Brethren. For they, who neglect Opportunities of expreſſing it to them, whoſe Converſation is naturally an Endearment, will be far from diſcharging it to God, with whom they cannot converſe. And therefore the largeſt Pretenſions to this Virtue, while the Makers of them continue uncharitable, are certainly inſincere.

21. *And this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother alſo.*

21. Beſides, he that is ſincere, obeys God in one Command as well as another; and 'tis plain, God hath commanded the Love of our Neighbour, as well as that of himſelf. Nay, he expects, that we ſhould make the Love of our Neighbour for his ſake the Evidence of our Love to him.

COMMENT.

IT hath been formerly obſerved, that this Epiſtle is probably thought to have been written, with a particular View to the Corruptions of the *Gnoſtick* Hereſy. Now among other Abominations charged upon this Sect, theſe are very remarkable: That they held it lawful to deny Chriſt in Time of Danger and Perſecution; and not only ſo, but that they even took Part with the avowed Enemies to the Chriſtian Faith, in perſecuting them who ſtedfaſtly adhered to it. This gave Occaſion to the Apoſtle, to enlarge more particularly upon the two great Duties of loving God, and our Brethren. And becauſe the Party ſo ſcandalouſly defective in both theſe, boaſted extremely of the Knowledge of God, and the Indwelling of God above the Rate of common Believers: St. *John* ſets himſelf to ſhew, how vain all ſuch Pretences are, in Them, whoſe Temper and Actions are ſo directly oppoſite to that God, who admits us to know him, with an Intent to make us like him; and who communicates the Grace of his Holy Spirit, to refreſh

Epiſt. for St. John's Day.

that

that Image, which the Depravation of Human Nature had defaced in our Hearts. And the Inference he draws from hence is, that our Perfection, in both these Regards, ought to be judged and measured, by the Proportion of those good Fruits and Effects, which they are found by Experience to produce in us.

Epist. Quinquag. *and* Adv. *Sund.*

Concerning Charity or Love in general, I have heretofore discoursed largely; by explaining the Nature and Qualities of this Virtue; and by proving how necessary and mutual the Dependance is, between that required to God, and that to our Brethren. The Excellence of that Duty will meet with a full Illustration, in a Place proper to it hereafter.

Gos. 18 *S. after* Trin.

The Reasonableness of being content for the sake of God and a good Conscience, to suffer any Hardships, to which the Wisdom of Providence shall see fit to expose us, hath likewise been consider'd. So that all, left for me to discourse of upon the present Occasion seems to be, The explaining some Arguments peculiar to this Place, by which St. *John* hath chosen to enforce the Duty of Charity, in the Passage now before us: And which have not had yet so particular a Consideration, as the others mentioned before.

Gosp. 6 *S. after* Epiph.
5 *S. in* Lent.

The Point I mean chiefly to insist upon, is, The Obligation lying upon us to love one another, from the Sense we ought to have of God's exceeding great Love to Us. In treating hereof, I shall endeavour in some Measure to make you sensible, *First*, How deeply we stand engaged to Charity upon this Account: And *Secondly*, How proper a Method that Charity is, to express our Gratitude due for it. In both Particulars confining my Discourse to the Topicks furnished by St. *John*, in the Passage now under Consideration.

I. Our Engagement, upon the Account of God's Love to us, will appear very great, and very manifest, to any who shall consider, as he ought, the several Circumstances

Circumſtances intimated here, which concur to magnify and illuſtrate it. Such are the ſeveral Enhancements of this Favour; ſo lately taken notice of, that I ſhall not need here again to repeat them. And therefore, to ſave the Reader's and my own Time, I will at preſent only obſerve the Inferences, naturally reſulting from thence, as to the Manner and Objects of our Charity; if we be, as we all ought to be, deſirous in good earneſt to imitate this Love of God to Mankind, in proper Expreſſions of ours to one another.

Goſp. for Mond. *in* Whitſ. Week.

Now, *Firſt*, This Example teaches us not to think any Thing in our Power too much, whereby we may contribute to the Benefit of our Brethren, whoſe Neceſſities call for it, and are capable of Relief by it. The only begotten Son of God was a Gift of ineſtimable Value; the nobleſt and moſt beneficial, that was poſſible, even for Him who is the Fountain of all Goodneſs, to beſtow. That, which juſtifies the Perſons, to whom he was given, in a ſtedfaſt Dependance upon the Giver, for any Supplies their Occaſions can ever require: In regard he, who ſo liberally gave the greateſt Good, cannot be reaſonably ſuppoſed to grudge a leſs. And how high the Obligation of this Example lies upon Us, I ſhall not need to ſay, otherwiſe than by putting Men in mind, to what a Point the Apoſtle carries it, in the *Third* of this Epiſtle, *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, that he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren. But whoſo hath this World's Good, and ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* That is, the Evidences of God's Love are ſo engaging, as even to render the ſacrificing our Lives, for a greater and general Good, a becoming Inſtance of Charity, for them, who are zealous to imitate it in the juſt Perfection. But if any, who ought

Ver. 16, 17.

ought not to refuſe their very Lives, ſhall yet be ſo ſordid, as not to impart their Superfluities, for the Support of their Brethren, whoſe hard Caſe it is to want the Neceſſaries of Life; all the Pretences which ſuch hard-hearted Wretches make to the Love of God, are manifeſtly falſe and hypocritical.

2. *Secondly*, The End of God's giving his Son being to propitiate for the Sins of Men, is a good Intimation, that we do then expreſs our Love to our Brethren in the beſt and moſt Chriſtian Manner, when we moſt promote their Spiritual and Eternal Good. The Honour and Advancement of the Goſpel, by the Influence of their Examples, who ſuffer for their conſtant Adherence to the Truth of it, is generally believed to be that *laying down our Lives for the Brethren*, to which St. *John*, in the Place laſt cited, pronounces us obliged. Certain it is, however, that, let the Benefit of our Charity light immediately upon what Part of the Receiver it will; the Soul is that Part, to which it ſhould principally be directed, and wherein it ſhould center at laſt. This gives a juſt Preference to thoſe good Offices, by which the Ignorant are inſtructed, the Weak aſſiſted, the Miſtaken rectified in their Judgment, the Stupid awakened, the Vicious reclaimed, and the Obſtinate humbled. This renders the Admonition of our Teachers and Friends, the Corrections of Parents and Maſters, and the Diſcipline of the Laws, not only neceſſary Juſtice, but ſingular Kindneſs and Charity. And in general it may be ſaid, that, as the particular Inſtances of our Love muſt be regulated and determined, by the Circumſtances and Occaſions of thoſe who partake of it: So, of what Kind ſoever thoſe Inſtances be, the Comforts that are preſent and bodily, are always to be conſulted, as may prove moſt ſubſervient to their future and ſpiritual Advantage.

3. The Example of God's Love intimates to us, that we are by no Means to confine our Charity to Them,

Them, who have been kind to us, or deſerved well of us; for *herein*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* Ver. 10. The Perſons profited by this Love, are Sinners, the worſt of Men, the worſt of Enemies; and therefore none imitates this Love, who is not ready, in all fitting Occaſions and Inſtances, to extend it to every Man, even to Enemies themſelves. For the very worſt of theſe cannot deſerve ſo ill at Ours, as the very beſt of us have deſerved at God's Hands. 'Tis true indeed, God bears a very different Sort of Love to the Good, from that which he vouchſafes to have for the Evil. And this Pattern will juſtify ſome Diſtinctions to be made, between one Man and another; both in the Degree of our Affection, and in the Manner of our Behaviour. But, as *his Mercy is over all his Works*, and he *hates nothing that he hath made:* So muſt our Charity reach all Mankind, and utterly exclude none that are ſuch, be the Objections againſt them otherwiſe what they will.

And this leads me very naturally to conſider in the

II. *Second* Place, How proper a Method this Charity is, for expreſſing our Gratitude to God, who hath been ſo unſpeakably kind to us. In order whereunto, this Portion of Scripture furniſhes the following Arguments.

1. That we are in no Condition of making ſuitable Returns immediately to God himſelf. This I conceive to be the proper Importance of thoſe Words, at the 12th Verſe, *No Man hath ſeen God at any Time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us.* That all good Offices ought in ſome Way or other to be acknowledged, no truly ingenuous Mind can be inſenſible. When therefore ſuitable Returns cannot be made to the Party, who hath obliged us; our next Care is to expreſs our Obligations, by placing them upon ſome others dear to him,

and

and whoſe Advantage will be as kindly interpreted, as if the Thing had been done to himſelf. Such is the Caſe before us. Our Goods *extend not unto* God; but unto thoſe they may and do, who are his Creatures, his Children, who bear his Image and are his Receivers, here upon Earth. And therefore they, who neglect to uſe the Power they have of doing good to Them, whoſe Benefit will be kindly accepted; are deſervedly looked upon to be deficient in the Diſpoſition to do it at all. And it is highly probable, that, were God himſelf in a Condition of receiving or needing Inſtances of their Charity, they would be found altogether as backward in the exerting it towards him, as now they manifeſtly are toward his Proxies and Depoſitaries, who actually do need it, and are capable of it.

Pſal. xvi. 2.

2. Imitation and a Deſire of Likeneſs are natural and inſeparable Effects of Love; and therefore the Apoſtle made uſe of a very proper Motive, to excite this Affection to one another, when aſſuring us, that Love and Goodneſs is the very Eſſence of God: And, that they, who are not induſtrious to reſemble him in this Regard, do manifeſtly betray an Inſenſibility and Diſeſteem of his Divine Excellencies. For this indeed there can be no Excuſe. Becauſe that Love is the very Thing, by which they ſubſiſt; it comes home to the Feeling of every Man, and refreſhes his Memory with new Inſtances every Moment. So that, not to conſider, and eſteem, and admire, and copy after this Excellence, is in effect to forget, and to live without, God in the World; nay it is even, in the moſt brutiſh Manner, to forget ourſelves, and live in Contradiction to the Dictates of Human Nature. For,

Ver. 7, 8.

3. Likeneſs and Acquaintance naturally beget Tenderneſs. From whence again it is, that this Virtue hath very powerful Inducements to enforce it. Every other Man is as it were an Image and Tranſcript of our Selves.

ſelves. The Paſſions, the Deſires, the Infirmities and Neceſſities of Human Nature, are the ſame in us all. And they, who are ſo nearly allied in Generals, may be brought as near to one another in Circumſtantials. So that whatever the Wants of any one Man actually are, the ſame it is poſſible for thoſe of any other Man to be. This Conſideration is a mighty Quickning to that Fellow-Feeling of other Mens Afflictions; which one would think could hardly be avoided, by thoſe, to whom they are continually preſent; who cannot help ſeeing them, and if they have any Humanity, muſt in ſome Degree ſuffer with them. Beſides, the Affairs of this mortal Life are ſo ordered, that, by a perpetual Intercourſe of Offices and Services, Men are the next Inſtruments of Profit and Delight to each other. And this begets kind Reſentments, not confined to thoſe Inſtruments alone, but to the whole Species. For every Individual either may, at ſome Time and in ſome Way we think not of, become ſuch to us; or at leaſt he puts us in Mind, and awakens our grateful Remembrances, of them that have already been ſuch. All which Endearments have this mighty Advantage of affecting us, that they are ſenſible and viſible; and ſo fitted for thoſe Impreſſions, by which, in the preſent State, a Creature compounded of Body as well as Soul, will find himſelf moſt powerfully wrought upon. Whereas the Love of God, though in itſelf infinitely greater than that of any, or of all the Men in the World can poſſibly be to us; yet coming from a diſtant and inviſible Benefactor, requires ſome Abſtraction and Train of Thought and Argument, to poſſeſs us with due Apprehenſions of it. Hence it is, that the Apoſtle argues with ſome Warmth, Ver. 20. *If a Man ſay, I love God, and hate his Brother, he is a Lyar; for he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?*

Laſtly, To all theſe Motives the Apoſtle adds that, which alone ought to be ſufficient; *That* the expreſ-

ſing our Thanks and Love to God, in the Manner I have been ſpeaking of, is exactly agreeable to his good Pleaſure, and the Subject of a poſitive Command. And ſuch a Command this is, as we may reaſonably preſume he will lay great Streſs upon, and require a ſtrict Account of. For none ſeems ſuperior to it, by all thoſe Marks, which are uſually thought to give One Command a Pre-eminence above the reſt. None is more frequently and ſolemnly inculcated: There is none, the Performance whereof is encouraged with more precious Promiſes of ample Rewards; none, whoſe Neglect draws down more heavy Puniſhment. Of the former we ſhall have other Occaſions to enlarge; of the laſt I am going to ſet before you a moſt memorable Inſtance, in the Goſpel appointed for this Day.

The Firſt Sunday after TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

St. Luke xvi. 19.

19. To the covetous Phariſees, who derided his former Diſcourſe upon Works of Charity (*See* Ver. 14.) our Lord proceeds to addreſs himſelf, by the following Parable, *There was*, &c.

19. *THERE was a certain rich Man, which was clothed in Purple and fine Linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every Day.*

20. *And there was a certain Beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his Gate full of Sores,*

21. * So Helpleſs and Friendleſs was he, that the Dogs, &c.

21. *And deſiring to be fed with the Crumbs which fell from the rich Man's Table: * Moreover the Dogs came and licked his Sores.*

22. This Man, worn away with Miſery and Want, died, and was by Angels conveyed into that happy Place, where the Souls of the Faithful are in Reſt and Joy. That rich Man died too, but there was an End of all his Happineſs.

22. *And it came to paſs that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Boſom: the rich Man alſo died, and was buried.*

23. *And in Hell he lift up his Eyes being in Torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Boſom.*

23. For He, being in the Place, where the Souls of the Wicked are, after their Departure out of the Body, *lifted.*

24. *And he cried, and ſaid, Father Abraham, have Mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus that he may dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue; for I am tormented in this Flame.*

25. *But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good Things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil Things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

26. *And beſides all this, between us and you there is a great Gulf fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you, cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that would come from thence.*

26. Add to this, that the Sentence you are now under is irreverſible, and it is to no Purpoſe to hope for any Change or Amendment after Death.

27. *Then he ſaid, I pray thee, therefore, Father, that thou wouldſt ſend him to my Father's Houſe:*

28. *For I have five Brethren; that he may teſtify unto them, leſt they alſo come into this Place of Torment.*

27, 28. If my own Caſe be ſo ſad, and paſt all Remedy, give me at leaſt the Opportunity of preventing it to others, by ſuffering *Lazarus* to go and warn my Relations, (who are not yet thus finally concluded by Death) what it is I endure, and what they muſt expect, except they amend their Lives.

29. *Abraham ſaith unto him, They have Moſes and the Prophets; let them hear them.*

29. To this *Abraham* replied, that they had ſufficient Warning and Motives to Reformation, afforded them already in the Holy Scriptures.

30. *And he ſaid, Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the Dead, they will repent.*

30. The Rich Man urged, that ſuch an extraordinary Appearance, as this he requeſted, would make ſtronger Impreſſion, than thoſe ordinary Means are uſed to do.

31. *And he ſaid unto him, If they hear not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, though one roſe from the Dead.*

31. *Abraham* returned, that this was not in reaſon to be expected; ſince the Evidence already made for the Truth of the Scriptures, is indeed much ſuperior to any that this Appearance and Teſtimony of *Lazarus* could receive. And They, who ſtood out againſt the One, would eaſily find Ways to elude the utmoſt Force, that could poſſibly be ſuppoſed in the Other.

COMMENT.

TWO great Deſigns our Bleſſed Maſter ſeems to have had, in the Portion of Scripture now before us.

Firſt, As in the Beginning of the Chapter he had ſhewed, that Good Works were the greateſt Wiſdom, and ſure to be amply rewarded; ſo here, he intends to forewarn Men, that the Neglect of ſuch Works, and the Abuſe of that Plenty and Power to do them which Providence puts into our Hands, ſhall not eſcape ſevere Puniſhment in another World. This Argument is proſecuted, from the 19th to the 26th *Verſe* incluſive.

Secondly, He gives us here an Intimation, that the Sum of our Duty is ſufficiently notified in Scripture: *That* ſtanding and ordinary Methods are what Men ought to be contented with; and ſuch, as will abundantly ſuffice for all, who are diſpoſed to make a right Uſe of them: *That* there is no need of Expreſſes from the other World, to ſignify the Condition of Souls departed, and the Rewards and Puniſhments awaiting People there, according to their good or ill Behaviour here: *That* God hath already done enough to reclaim Men; And, as he hath not obliged himſelf to more; ſo it is hard, if not impoſſible, to ſay, what would prove effectual to thoſe, who ſtand out againſt the preſent Evidence for Religion and a Future State. This ſeems to be the proper Importance of that, which paſſed between *Abraham* and the Rich Man; Of the Requeſt of ſending *Lazarus* back to admoniſh his ſurviving Brethren; And of the Denial of that Requeſt, as an Expedient, neither in itſelf juſt or reaſonable to be granted, nor one Whit more likely to ſucceed, than the Means of Perſuaſion enjoyed already; if, as an Act of extraordinary Indulgence, the ſending ſuch a Meſſage ſhould be granted.

I deſign this Diſcourſe ſhall be confined to the Former of theſe Subjects; by repreſenting the ſad Eſtate of

of thoſe hard-hearted Wretches in the next World, who, when they have Power and Opportunities, refuſe to do good in this World; and the Bleſſed Change which the Poor and Deſpiſed here make, in the Condition they enter upon there. This is deſcribed more particularly in the 23d, 24th, 25th, 26th *Verſes*. But that which I would principally inſiſt upon, is the Subſtance of *Abraham*'s Anſwer in thoſe remarkable Words, *Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good Things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil Things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Ver. 25. The Deſign of this Anſwer is plainly to ſhew, that God is juſt, nay merciful, when in a future State, (as is the Caſe before us) the Rich and Vain pay ſo dear for their Proſperity; and the Poor and Afflicted have ſo ample Amends made them for the Hardſhips and Sufferings, to which Need and Neglect had expoſed them in the preſent State.

Now, in order to a right Underſtanding and due Senſe of this Diſpenſation, the following Particulars ſhould be diligently obſerved.

1. *Firſt*, That ſuch Changes of Condition in a Future State, are by no Means a neceſſary Conſequence of our different Fortunes in This: Nor does the Caſe in hand warrant us to infer, that every Rich Man ſhall be *tormented* here, or every Poor Man *comforted* hereafter. The Rich Man had received his Good Things in his Life-time, but they were not the true Cauſe of his Torments after Death: *Lazarus* had received Evil Things in his Life-time, but neither were thoſe the Cauſe of his Comforts after Death; if conſidered ſtrictly, and by themſelves. The Occaſions indeed of Each they were; but their being even ſo much as Occaſions was not a natural, but an accidental Effect. That is, it was ſuch an Effect, as depended intirely upon the Diſpoſition and Management of the Parties concerned in them.

The rich Man laid it on thick, in Purple and fine Linen, in Vanity and Pomp: but the vaſt Sums, thus

ſquandered upon the Extravagance of Equipage and Apparel, ſome Part of them at leaſt, had he ſo pleaſed, 'tis ſure, might have been laid out in cloathing the Naked. And, if he had done this in any becoming Proportion, his Riches could not have riſen up in Judgment againſt him. He decked his Table too with coſtly Proviſions; and thus in Riot and Intemperance, ('tis probable) in ſplendid Entertainments and ſuperfluous Delicacies, ('tis certain) he conſumed thoſe good Creatures of God, which He, who had received ſo very freely, ought to have given freely. But he might, inſtead of, or even with, high Eating, have ſpared ſome little plain, and conſequently ſome cheap Suſtenance, to refreſh thoſe hungry Bellies, which were in Effect charged upon Him, by that liberal Providence, which brought them to want the Supports of his overflowing Plenty, and laid as proper Objects in his Way, to ſhed itſelf upon.

Nay, though we ſhould admit the very beſt of the Caſe, and better by much than this Parable repreſents it. Let us ſuppoſe him hoſpitable without Luxury, and ſplendid without Vanity; that both his Attire and whole Courſe of Living were agreeable to the Rules of Decency and Cuſtom, and what the World would expect from his Quality and Eſtate: Yet even thus were he very far from being without Blame. For the Poor have always a Right to ſome Part of the Poſſeſſions of the Rich. And, if this Man had not ſinn'd in giving too much to Himſelf, 'tis plain he ſinn'd in giving too little to Others; and worſt of all, in giving nothing to ſuch an Object as *Lazarus*. Purple and fine Linen may no doubt be very innocent; but they can never be ſo to them, who, without any manner of Remorſe, can ſee their Brethren lie naked and ſhivering, and periſh at their Doors. A ſumptuous Table may be not only allowable, but often commendable, nay, ſometimes neceſſary, but not to them, who grudge the very *Crumbs that fall from it*, to thoſe pined Wretches, whoſe Neceſſities are ſo preſſing, and their Requeſts

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at the ſame Time ſo modeſt, as to deſire *Crumbs* only, for their Comfort and Relief.

This Man was then puniſhed, not for poſſeſſing much, no nor for ſpending much; but for ſpending it in a wrong and unprofitable Way. He laid all out upon that which was ſuperfluous, and neglected that which was neceſſary. His Hand was always open to his own Vanities, and always ſhut to the Neceſſities of the Poor. So far from retrenching one needleſs Expence, as not to reſcue a helpleſs Wretch from periſhing, by that which would coſt him nothing. Thus it was want of Bowels that condemned the rich Man to Hell, which had he had and exerciſed, the Riches he enjoyed, had become Means of advancing Him to a brighter Crown in Heaven. But Riches ought not to be blamed for the Abuſes of them; for they are capable of being turn'd to good or evil Purpoſes, juſt as the Owners pleaſe. All this is clear from our Lord's Deſcription of the laſt General Judgment: The Goats on the left Hand are ſuppoſed to have had the ſame Abilities and Opportunities of doing Works of Mercy, with the Sheep on the Right; and Both are equal, ſo far as Both were able. But the Difference between them lay elſewhere. The Sheep exerted their Power gladly. They fed and cloathed, and viſited, the diſtreſſed Members of Chriſt; and for ſo doing, they enter into Life Eternal. The Goats did not make the like Uſe of their Power; and, becauſe they might have done the ſame Good, but would not, therefore they are doomed to everlaſting Puniſhment.

Thus the Caſe ſtands again, with regard to *Lazarus:* Had he murmured and blaſphemed, or, for a preſent Remedy, betaken himſelf to Lying or Forgery, to Theft and Pilfering, to tricking of Creditors, or any of thoſe baſe and wicked Shifts, which we ſo commonly ſee Want drive Men to; his Evil here muſt have been worſe hereafter. It was not Poverty alone could carry him into *Abraham's Boſom*; but Poverty, adorned with a Mind and Life ſtrictly honeſt, a Spirit meek and con-

tented, reſigned to God's Diſpoſal, and humbly truſting in his Goodneſs, for a Recompenſe to be made in His due Time. Many, no doubt, receive good Things, not in this Life only, but in the Next too: and many likewiſe receive evil Things in Both. Therefore when it is ſaid, *Thou receivedſt good Things*, and *Lazarus evil Things*; It is neither ſaid, nor meant, that merely for their having received them, the One is tormented now, or the Other comforted now; but thoſe good Things are brought to the rich Man's Remembrance, only that he might recollect and ſee and juſtify God's Providence in all his Diſpenſations, to make him ſenſible, how largely even ſo ill a Man had ſhared in the Divine Bounty: And, that thoſe who have leaſt of it in the next World, cannot fairly complain, that God is their Debtor, when the whole Account is ſtated. And this is my

2. *Second* Conſideration for evincing the Juſtice and the Mercy of God, in the Caſe now before us. For He is certainly juſt, who gives to every one as much as his Due; and he is certainly merciful, who gives to every one more than his Due. Now it is no leſs certain, that both theſe Things are done, as often as Wicked Men are proſpered here, and tormented hereafter; or Good Men are afflicted here, and comforted hereafter.

Among ſeveral Arguments for ſatisfying our Doubts with reference to the unequal Diſtribution of temporal Bleſſings, this has not the leaſt Weight: That no mere Mortal is abſolutely perfect, or even void of Sin: And yet ſcarce any is ſo deſperately abandoned neither as not to have ſome commendable Quality, ſome Actions of a better kind, to temper, and allay the Venom of, his bad ones. Now Reaſon, as well as Religion, inſtructs us, that it becomes a holy and juſt Judge, to award a Recompence in proportion to each Man's Deſerts: So, as that neither the wilful and open Violation of his Laws may paſs unpuniſhed; nor the Obſervance of them lie overlooked and unrewarded. But then the ſame Degrees of Nicety and Rigour are not alike neceſſary,

ceſſary, in both theſe Diſpenſations. For in puniſhing, the Penalty ought not to exceed what may juſtly be inflicted; becauſe in ſuch a Caſe the Sufferer would receive Wrong. But in rewarding, the Bounty may exceed the Merits of the Cauſe; and in remitting, the Offender may be ſpared a Part, of what in Strictneſs the Judge could inflict: Becauſe Mercy is the Prerogative of a Supreme Law-giver; and neither the Party, nor any other Perſon, is properly injured by extending it.

Now *Godlineſs*, we are taught, *is profitable for all Things*. It ſerves every Intereſt a good and wiſe Man can have; as being encouraged by *the Promiſes*, both of *the Life that now is, and of that which is to come:* Whereas a vicious Converſation is diſcountenanced by the Threatnings of both Lives. So that God keeps his Word, if he reward or puniſh Men, in either Way or Place; provided what he ſends upon them in each kind, be correſpondent to their Deſerts, and to his own Declarations. And of That we ſhall be able to make ſome tolerable Judgment by applying theſe general Rules of Juſtice to the Matter in hand: *viz.* By ſetting the Beggar in the Parable, as a Specimen of Good Men, afflicted here, but comforted hereafter: And the Rich Man, of wicked Men proſperous here, but tormented hereafter. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Allowing then to *Lazarus* all the forementioned Virtues for ſanctifying his Poverty, all that were poſſible to be attained and practiſed in thoſe trying Circumſtances: Yet *Lazarus* was a Man; and of all Men we know, that they have *ſinned and come ſhort of the Glory of God*, as of all Sin we know, that *the Wages of it is Death*; ſuch Death as, when oppoſed to Eternal Life, muſt mean a State of endleſs Miſery. If God then determine to puniſh for Sin; Is it not kind and gentle to accept a temporary Pain, though this Calamity be preſent; rather than to reſerve Men for an irremediable one, though that be diſtant and future? And if this Man who is an Offender in ſome Points, be excellently good in the main; yet ſhall he be no Loſer at laſt, nor

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have Cauſe to think any of his good Deeds neglected; provided effectual Courſe be taken, for Amends to be made him, in that unchangeable Condition. Now of this we have poſitive Aſſurance, not only from the Eſtimate made by St. *Paul*, Rom. viii. 18. *I reckon that the Sufferings of this preſent Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us:* But more eſpecially, from that over-ruling Goodneſs, which the ſame Apoſtle obſerves, renders thoſe Sufferings Inſtruments of our Happineſs. For this is our Conſolation, that *our Affliction is light*, that it is but *for a Moment*, that *the Glory* deſigned for our Retribution is *a Weight*, a *far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*; and laſtly, that that *light* Affliction worketh out this *Weight* for us. Is it not now ſufficiently clear, that both the Juſtice and the Mercy of God are magnified, in that Adverſity of pious Men, ſo largely paid, and improved to ſuch vaſt Account? Nay, that even *Lazarus*, when thus *comforted*, had Reaſon to think himſelf liberally dealt with; notwithſtanding all the *Evil Things*, which he did, or could receive in his Life-time?

2 Cor. iv. 17.

Nor is the Point leſs clear, with reſpect to the other Branch of the Parable; wherein the Rich Sinner receives his good Things in preſent, and his Torments after Death. For thoſe Torments are no more, than the juſt Hire of an ungodly Life. The Bleſſings of this Life are promiſed indeed to Virtue, but it is to the ſincere Purſuit, and general Practice of Virtue. Where a very few good Qualities happen ſo to mingle, as to be vaſtly overpowered or out-numbered by bad, ſuch Promiſes cannot take Place. If then upon Perſons, who incur the Puniſhment both of this and another State, thoſe of another only are inflicted: This is an Act of Long-ſuffering. Here are kind Invitations to Repentance, and Warnings and Opportunities multiplied, for eſcaping the Judgments of both States. Thus the Evil they receive hereafter, is what ſuch Men have deſerved; and the Good they receive here is more than they

they have deſerved. This is Bounty and Mercy, and that, to be ſure, is Juſtice. Eſpecially, when the Neglect and Abuſe of Mercy add to the Meaſure of their Crimes and Condemnation. All which, as it is agreeable to the Reaſon of the Thing, ſo ſome have thought it implied in the Original ἀπέλαβες. That Word implying to receive, not ſo properly in the Quality of a Gift, as of a Payment: And, that each of the Parties to whom it is referred, had the utmoſt they could demand, or, with any manner of Title, expect.

3. *Thirdly*, There ſeems to be ſomewhat of a peculiar Force in that Expreſſion, *Thy good Things*; that is, ſuch as thou didſt eſteem good, and prefer above all others. For wicked and worldly Men ſet their Hearts upon the preſent, and contemn, and even hold in Deriſion, all future Advantages. So that God proceeds with ſuch People, not only in the Method of Juſtice ſtrictly conſidered; but he complies with their own Wiſhes and Inclinations, and pays them in ſuch Coin, as themſelves chuſe to be paid in. If, at the Summing up of the Account, this be found not to anſwer Expectation, they have none but their own Folly to thank for it; which, in Deſpight of all Warning to the contrary, will make a loſing Bargain, and place their principal Happineſs, where it is not to be found. But, with how ill a Grace does any Man complain for being taken at his Word; and call it hard to miſs of that Felicity, which himſelf had obſtinately thruſt away from himſelf? Thus the Rich Man valued Wealth and worldly Magnificence, and the Pleaſures of Fleſh and Senſe, far before all the Bliſſes and Glories of Heaven; and he enjoyed the Fortune he would have carved for himſelf, his *good Things in his Life-time*. *Lazarus*, on the other Hand, was content to undergo the Hardſhips of unpitied Poverty and Affliction, in proſpect of a Recompence after Death; and God gratified him in that better Thing, which he had choſen. And the Event proved, that he choſe wiſely, and had not truſted, nor ſubmitted, nor ſuffered, in vain.

The

The main Point reſulting from this Paſſage, being by this Time, I hope, ſufficiently proved, as to the Juſtice and Mercy of God, in diſtributing the Bleſſings and Puniſhments of this and a future State; I proceed, in the *Second* Place, to leave it upon my Reader, with ſome ſeaſonable Inferences, and ſo conclude.

Firſt then, We learn from hence, what miſtaken Meaſures they go upon, who form a Judgment either of their own, or another's, Happineſs and Miſery, by their different Fortunes or Stations in the World. For, according to this Standard, who would have ſcrupled to pronounce the Rich Man in this Parable moſt bleſſed, and *Lazarus* the moſt wretched of all mortal Creatures? And yet, how diſtant had this raſh Sentence been from the Truth of the Caſe? Alas! *The Faſhion*, ſays St. *Paul*, (or, as the Original hath it, the *Scene*) *of this World paſſeth away*. And an errant Scene it is indeed: A mere Theatrical Repreſentation, all over Deluſion and Deceit. Upon this Stage of Life, we ſee, we admire, we envy, a Perſon ſupporting the Character of a Prince: We put his Splendor, his Retinue, his Wealth, his Power, and large Dependencies, into the Idea of the Man: But when the Curtain is let down, and Death ſhall (as long it cannot be before it will) diſrobe and ſtrip him of all that borrowed Luſtre; this ſets us right, and diſabuſes thoſe falſe Imaginations, with which the ſolemn Pageantry of Forms, the Glitterings of Greatneſs, and the Diſtance of univerſal Obeyſance and Reſpect, had blinded us before. 'Tis then we ſee the Man, as he is; and 'till this Change be made, we judge in the Dark. For he alone is Great, whoſe naked Virtue merits our Eſteem. He alone is rich, who is ſo towards God, and in Good Works. He only happy, who ſhines by his own Light. A Light, not like this Squanderer's, that dazzles Mens Eyes a-while, and ſets in utter Darkneſs; but which, like that of *Lazarus*, riſes from the Midſt of Obſcurity, grows ſtrong and bright, and, when eclipſed by Death, emerges from the Grave into perfect and eternal Day.

2 Cor. vii. 11.

2. *Secondly*,

2. *Secondly*, Here is Comfort and Encouragement for thoſe of our Brethren, whoſe Circumſtances are ſtrait and low in the World. This Paſſage ſhews, they ſhall not always be forgotten; but, if their Poverty be ſuſtained with Patience, and Contentedneſs, and Truſt in a good God; there is a Time coming, when He will not neglect them, though Men may. And they, who ſo haughtily and coldly look down upon their Sufferings in the mean while, may one Day find cauſe to envy their Happineſs. For, when the gay, but fleeting, Vanities of this World ſhall be reduced to a Coffin and a Shroud, when Pomp and Honour vaniſh like a Shadow, when proud-hearted Wealth lies covered in the Duſt, the Pity, or the Scorn and Curſe of Survivors; then ſhall the godly Poor be taken up by Angels, and carried into Reſt; from Grief and Labour, to Manſions of Peace, and Joy, and Glory everlaſting.

Let this then, my Friends and Brethren, on whom the World hath frowned, Let this ſupport your Spirits, and ſoften all your Difficulties and Toils; that God hath choſen the honeſt and pious Poor for his own. That provided ſuch be rich in Faith and Virtue, without any Diſtinction of Quality or Fortune here, they ſhall be equal to the greateſt of the Sons of Men, veſted in the ſame Title to the ſame Inheritance, and to every precious Promiſe, which his Bleſſed Goſpel hath any where made to them, who beſt love, and are beſt beloved by him.

3. But above all, in the *Third* Place, the Rich ſhould take this Warning, to uſe their Plenty wiſely and profitably: leſt either their Luxury and Vanities, if it be employed amiſs, or the intemperate Love and Ruſt of this Talent, if not employed at all, be a Witneſs againſt them in the Laſt Day. This Parable caſts no Reproach upon the Rich Man, for raiſing his Eſtate by unjuſt and fraudulent Methods, or for not paying punctually for all his gay Cloathing and ſumptuous Table. And yet, ſuppoſing him the faireſt Dealer

that

that ever lived, this ſingle Fault of Hardheartedneſs, and not diſtributing to the Neceſſities of the Poor, was ſufficient to conſign him to the Flames of Hell. So true it is, that they, who fall into Temptation by Wealth, periſh by a Snare of their own laying; and that it is not Money, but the *Love* and the Abuſe *of Money*, which is *the Root of all Evil.* For Good this may do much: Much to Other People, more to the Owners: And therefore They, who have the Power and Means, muſt look well to it, that the Inclination be not wanting. Which Want muſt indeed be inexcuſable, eſpecially when ſuch Opportunities for improving, and ſuch Objects for inviting, the Exerciſe of this noble Grace of Charity, are plentifully and perpetually offering themſelves.

1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

If then your Riches and the Glory of your Houſes be increaſed; remember how this Scripture reminds you, that you *can carry nothing away with you, when you die, neither ſhall* one whit of *your Pomp follow you.* If any, like another Rich Man in this Goſpel, be in Perplexity and Doubt, where to beſtow his Fruits and his Goods; let him reflect upon the Application. Thence he will learn, how little need there is to pull down his Barns, and build greater; when ſo many large and ſafe Storehouſes ſtand ready provided to his Hands, where he may beſtow, where he may lay them up, for many Years; nay, where he may put them out to the moſt growing Intereſt, with a moſt infallible Security to the Principal. For by theſe Good Works it is, that Men eſcape the Condemnation of the Rich Man now before us. Which God gives us Grace to do for his ſake, who himſelf vouchſafed to *become Poor*, that *we through his Poverty might be made Rich*, even Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Pſal. xlix. 17.

Luke xii. 16.

2 Cor. viii. 9.

The Second SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O Lord, who never faileſt to help and govern them, whom thou doſt bring up in thy ſtedfaſt Fear and Love; Keep us, we beſeech thee, under the Protection of thy good Providence, and make us to have a perpetual Fear and Love of thy Holy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Pſal. ix. 10. xxxiv. 18, 20. xxxi. 23, 24.

The EPISTLE.

1 *St.* John iii. 13.

13. *Marvel not, my Brethren, if the World hate you.*

PARAPHRASE.

13. By what was ſaid of *Cain*'s Hatred to *Abel*, and the Occaſion of it, you may learn not to think it new or ſtrange if wicked Men hate you, notwithſtanding, or even upon the Account of your Piety and Virtue.

14. *We know that we have paſſed from Death unto Life, becauſe we love the Brethren: he that loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death.*

15. *Whoſoever hateth his Brother, is a Murderer: and ye know that no Murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him.*

14, 15. Mean while, as Charity in us is an Evidence of our regenerate State, ſo is ſuch Malice in them as ſure a Mark of their being ſtill in an unregenerate and damnable State: Every ſpightful Man being in the Eye of God (who judges every one by the Diſpoſition of his Heart, and not by outward Acts only) a Murderer.

16. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, becauſe he laid down his Life for us: and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*

17. *But whoſo hath this World's Good, and ſeeth his Brother have Need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

16, 17. See Comment on Epiſt. 1 *S.* after *Trinity*.

18. *My little Children, let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth.*

18. The Love we are bound to, muſt not conſiſt, and therefore muſt not reſt, in outward Profeſſion only; but muſt prove its Sincerity by Action. See *James* ii. 14, 17.

19, 20. This will render us acceptable to God, who is not to be impoſed upon by falſe Pretences, but knows us more perfectly, than we do ourſelves. (See Vol. I. Page 96, 97.)

19. *And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him.*

20. *For if our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things.*

21, 22. Yet if we are not conſcious of any Inſincerity, this will juſtify our Dependence upon his Favour and Goodneſs, and Readineſs to hear and anſwer our Prayers.

21. *Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

22. *And whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him, becauſe we keep his Commandments, and do thoſe Things that are pleaſing in his Sight.*

23. For, in ſhort, true Faith, and true Charity are the Sum of that Duty, he requires from us.

23. *And this is his Commandment, that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment.*

24. *And he that keepeth his Commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

COMMENT.

THE Predictions of our Bleſſed Lord concerning the fierce and implacable Hatred, which his Diſciples ſhould after his Departure ſucceed to, and be conformed to his Image and Sufferings in, this Apoſtle lived to ſee accompliſh'd, in a long Courſe of Perſecutions, carried on by the moſt united Malice, that ever the World ſaw any Inſtance of. And in regard, to Perſons conſcious of their own Innocence and univerſal Good-will to Mankind, a Treatment ſo unworthy might be Matter of Aſtoniſhment; St. *John* does here, after his Maſter's Example, intimate, that there was nothing in all this, all Circumſtances conſidered, which

See John xv. 18 *to* 26.

was

was diſagreeable, either to the Nature of Things, or to the Character of the Men, who were guilty of ſuch Barbarities. The Relation theſe Diſciples bore to Jeſus Chriſt, their engaging in the ſame Cauſe of Piety and Truth, practiſing the ſame Virtues of Meekneſs and Conſtancy, of Purity and true Charity, were Intimations ſufficient, for Them to prepare for the ſame Treatment with him, who had in his own Perſon left them an Example: An Example of enduring Evil no leſs than of doing well, in the diſcharge of his Miniſtry; and of the many invidious, but yet neceſſary Offices that muſt naturally follow thereupon.

St. *Peter*, it is true, aſked that Queſtion, *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is Good?* Meaning, that it is very unreaſonable any one ſhould; and that, if any Thing can, Virtue will certainly be a ſure, at leaſt it is the beſt Defence Men are capable of providing to themſelves, againſt the Inſults and Injuries of malicious wicked People, that They, who make it the great Buſineſs of their Lives, to give Offence juſtly to none, and quietly to put up all that hath been (though never ſo unjuſtly) given Them, ſhould not be ſuffered to live at their Eaſe: That Men, who abſtract themſelves, as much as may be, from this World and its Advantages, and conſequently never interfere in thoſe Intereſts and Purſuits, which occaſion the eagereſt Emulations and bittereſt Enmities, between Rivals, jealous and envious of each other; where the Succeſs of one Party is always a Diſappointment or Loſs to the reſt of the Pretenders: That in this Caſe, I ſay, Men ſhould not be content to let Them alone, whoſe Aim, and Endeavour, and utmoſt Zeal, are directed to ſuch Objects only, as They, who give them moſt Uneaſineſs, deſpiſe and refuſe, or perhaps diſbelieve and ſcoff at: That They, who omitted nothing proper to engage the Affections of all Men, and were ready to ſacrifice their very Lives for the common Good, ſhould

1 Ep. iii. 13.

ſhould be repaid with Contradiction and Calumny, with Bitterneſs and Spight, is what in Reaſon may appear monſtrous and impracticable. But Reaſon ſuppoſes Men to act upon Principles, and to weigh Things in a juſt Ballance. Whereas Fact demonſtrates, that Paſſion and Corruption are the Meaſures, they generally and chiefly proceed upon. Theſe expect to be ſoothed and flattered, even in their Vices and Follies. They diſdain that, which is indeed the true and only Way of doing them Service; and never eſteem themſelves ſerved, except in a Way of their own Choice and Liking. To this Depravation it is, that all the Perſecutions of our Bleſſed Lord and his Diſciples muſt be imputed. They were reckoned, and treated as Enemies, by them, to whom they told the Truth. Truths, which, becauſe in themſelves neceſſary and profitable, their Character obliged them undauntedly to publiſh; but withal Truths, which, becauſe they lay croſs to the Errors and Paſſions of a ſinful World, the Prejudices and Vices, encountered by them, had rendered of all others moſt unacceptable.

The Preachers then and Miniſters of our Saviour and his Bleſſed Goſpel were as ſo many Champions, ſet in the Forefront of the Battle. But, though the Heat of the Action would lie chiefly upon theſe; yet Chriſtians, even of the meaneſt and moſt private Capacity, would all be ſure to find their Part in it. Unlikeneſs of Principles and Practices does naturally beget Coldneſs, and Coldneſs tends to alienate our Affections. And an immoderate Fondneſs for, and Impatience of Contradiction to, our own Opinions and Manners, are generally ſeen to abound moſt, and carry the Point higheſt, where Men are moſt in the Wrong. How therefore could it be, that a Sort of Perſons ſhould be well with the World, whoſe Doctrines and Judgment, whoſe Ends and Actions, were ſo perfectly different from theirs? Whoſe Faith taught its Profeſſors to forſake and deſpiſe thoſe Objects, which

which all, who did not profeſs it, did moſt paſſionately love and purſue? In a Word, whoſe Innocence, and Purity, and truly wiſe Behaviour, was a continual Reproach, and manifeſt Condemnation, to the Folly of thoſe ſordid and ſenſual Luſts, which the ſo much greater Part of Mankind ſought Happineſs by indulging, without any Controul?

Suppoſing therefore, as it is moſt reaſonable, that St. *John* addreſſes himſelf to good Chriſtians at large, 'tis evident, they all ſtood in need of being fortified againſt a Calamity, which all would be called to ſuffer.

And though, when the Reaſon of Things is abſtractedly conſidered, there might appear no Danger of a Malice, ſo perfectly undeſerved: Yet when it is conſidered, how Mankind are uſed to act, when Reaſon is borne down, by the Corruptions of Prejudice and Paſſion; the Caſe becomes very different. For then the not deſerving Hardſhips and ill Treatment may turn to an accidental Occaſion of exaſperating ſome Sort of People the more, and may even increaſe thoſe Outrages and Sufferings, which it ought effectually to prevent.

Mean while, how black a Guilt ſuch Malice draws upon the Party envenomed with it, this ſhort Account of the Matter ſufficiently diſcovers. But the Method, and Arguments uſed by this Apoſtle, are ſuch as enforce the Duty, and the Neceſſity, of Charity to the higheſt Degree; and ought by no Means to be paſſed over, without our particular Conſideration.

That the doing deſpight to good Men, merely on the Account of their being Good, was no new or ſurpriſing Thing, he had ſhewed, by calling to mind an Inſtance of it, almoſt as old as the World itſelf. The Cruelty and unnatural Murder, committed by *Cain* upon his Brother *Abel*, was a famous Type of the Chriſtian Blood to be ſhed in great Abundance, upon no other Provocation, but that of the Perſecutors being evil, and the Sufferers righteous. But, in the managing of this Argument, he draws it to an Infe-

rence, not confined to the Hatred of evil Men to Good only; nor to Perſecution and Death only: No. He extends it to any one Man hating any Other; to the inward Reſentment, as well as to the outward Act. For ſo I take his Meaning, where loving the Brethren is made the known Diſtinction, of a truly regenerate Chriſtian, or of *paſſing from Death unto Life:* Where They, who do it not, are declared out of a State of Salvation, or *to abide in Death:* And where the Sentence of Murder, and Eternal Damnation conſequent upon it, is pronounced upon every one, that *hateth his Brother.* All which, in the ſtricteſt Interpretation of the Words, we ſhall find exactly agreeable to our Lord's own Declarations in the Caſe, when inſtancing in ſuch Reſentments, as are inconſiſtent with the Righteouſneſs, required from his Diſciples; and the commonly neglected Expreſſions of Anger, as Violations of the *Sixth* Commandment. The Reaſonableneſs of which (ſeemingly perhaps hard) Determinations, (having already treated of the other Particulars, moſt remarkable in this Exhortation to univerſal Charity) it may be of ſome Importance, to take this Opportunity for explaining.

Ver. 14.

Ver. 15.

Matt. v. 21, 22.

To this Purpoſe it were eaſy to ſhew the manifold Miſchiefs, which would unavoidably deſtroy the Happineſs and Order of Society and Mankind, were the leaſt Indulgence allowed to ſo reſtleſs and unreaſonable a Paſſion, as this of Hatred. And conſequently, how far that Law would be from doing its Buſineſs, which makes the Happineſs and Security of the World one main End of its Inſtitution, ſhould it leave any Seeds of Contention uncondemned. But that I wave at preſent: And will reſtrain my Thoughts now to the Caſe, as it ſtands with Regard to a Man's own Conſcience, and Almighty God. Suppoſing all the while, that I am reaſoning with thoſe, who profeſs at leaſt to make the Chriſtian Religion the Rule of Conſcience, and Standard of Obedience.

Now

Now the Deſign of this Religion is plainly to change and purify Men's Minds; to carry Righteouſneſs and Charity in thither; not to content itſelf with Forms and outward Shew, but entirely to poſſeſs, and effectually influence the whole Man. Charity, we are told in this Scripture, muſt never reſt in the Thoughts and Affections of the Soul. But how ſhall it exert itſelf in becoming Words and Actions, and *love in Deed and in Truth*, unleſs it firſt be planted, and have taken ſtrong Root there? When theſe Thoughts are corrupt, the Fountain of Action is imbittered and polluted: And He, who thinks and wiſhes ill, is uncharitable and unchriſtian, as well as He, who ſpeaks and acts ſo. Men may attain to ſuch Government of their Paſſions, as to ſtifle the Flame, and keep it from breaking out; but They, who ſuffer them to burn within, muſt not preſume themſelves to be innocent. They may value their Wiſdom upon ſuch Occaſions; but that, which in theſe Reſtraints is Wiſdom, falls far ſhort of Duty, and muſt by no Means paſs for true Religion. For God is a God of Spirits; and the Tribunal of Chriſt is much unlike thoſe upon Earth, which can take Cognizance of Overt-Acts only. He underſtands our moſt ſecret Intentions, and judges Men according to their Wills. The Good we would do, but cannot, ſhall be rewarded; and the Evil, which we are diſpoſed to do, though not actually done, ſhall be puniſhed. Hence, if a Man keep Malice, though but in his Heart; if he wiſh or rejoice at the Miſery or Harm of his Brother; this Man is, in the Eye of God, and of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, *a Murderer*.

And thus his Conſcience will tell him, that, in right and good Reaſon, it ought to be. For whoever ſhall ſit down, and argue the Matter coolly and fairly with himſelf, ſhall certainly find the Reſolution of his own Mind turn at laſt, after this Manner. That which I deſire may happen, and take Satisfaction in ſeeing

done by another Hand; what Principle is it, that keeps me from inflicting with my own? If ſome ſudden Change befals my Neighbour's Fortunes, the Diminution of his Honour or Eſtate, the blemiſhing his Credit and Reputation, and I feel a Secret Pleaſure in ſuch Calamities: Can it be Charity, that ties up my Tongue from Bitterneſs and Slander, or my Hands from Invaſion and Cruelty? No certainly. He that triumphs in Miſchief, and does not act it himſelf; he that is fond of and cheriſhes a Scandal, but forbears to raiſe or ſpread it; It is not Religion, but ſome other Conſideration, by which even this Man is reſtrained. But alas! How few are there, in Compariſon, who think themſelves bound to ſtop here? How few, who, while they hold their Hands from Actions, yet make no Scruple to give their Tongues a Liberty of ſpeaking *all Words that may do hurt*, and ſo contribute to the Diſgrace and Grief of their injured or afflicted Brother? And, if they, with theſe ſharp Razors, wound and mangle a bleeding Reputation; would not the ſame Malice unſheathe their Sword and thruſt it into his Bowels; if their own Safety, the Fear of Human Laws, or ſome other prudential Conſideration, did not bind their Hands, which leaves their Tongues and Thoughts at Liberty? For, were Religion, were the Fear and Love of God, their Check; this would prevent the very Beginnings of Malice. This tells us, that we muſt be compaſſionate and kind; that we muſt do to every other Man, whatſoever we would that he ſhould do to us; that but to meditate or delight in Evil is a Sin; and, that no Inſtance of Goodneſs ſhould be wanting, which the Circumſtances of any Brother render ſeaſonable for him to receive, and ours have put it in our Power to give: That a Deſign of making him uneaſy is not one whit leſs murderous and guilty, becauſe not proſecuted in Tenderneſs to one's ſelf, and not to be effected with Impunity. Thus God interprets it, and

Pſal. iii. 5.

by

by this Rule he will proceed with us; for he declares himſelf a Tryer of the Heart, and that, in our laſt great Reckoning, *Every ſecret Thing* ſhall be *brought into Judgment.* Eccleſ. xii. 14.

As therefore the Former Conſideration upon this Portion of Scripture, ſhould ſupport and fortify Good Men in their Duty, when they meet with unſuitable and unworthy Returns, from an injurious and wicked World; ſo ſhould this latter be a Warning to us, not to give way to the leaſt Motions toward an uncharitable Diſpoſition. The former Caſe hath the Juſtice, the Goodneſs, and the unchangeable Promiſes of God; the Examples of the Bleſſed *Jeſus* himſelf, of his Apoſtles and Diſciples, Saints and glorified Spirits innumerable; and the ſweet Satisfactions of a clear Conſcience, for its Comfort and Encouragement. The Latter hath the Inſtance of *Cain*, *The* dreadful Guilt of all, whoſe Malice renders them his curſed Seed: *The* Sentence of the Divine Law, and the Severity of a Judge, *from whom no Secrets are hid*; as ſo many Monuments of Juſtice, and ſure Indications of Condemnation and ſevere Vengeance, for its Terror and Scourge. Let us not therefore be weary of well doing, how ill ſoever our good Actions are received; becauſe there is a Time coming, when we ſhall certainly reap, if we faint not. And let us not cheriſh any Thought of the leaſt Tendency toward Uncharitableneſs or Malice; remembring, that our very Inclinations and Deſires lie open to him, with whom we have to do; and that, if we could in this Matter deceive and mock even our own Conſciences, yet cannot he be mocked, who (as we read To-day) *is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all Things.*

The SECOND SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE. *St.* Luke xiv. 16.

16. Compare this Parable with that of St. *Matth.* xxii. 2, &c.

16. *A Certain Man made a great Supper, and bade many:*

17. *And ſent his Servant at Supper-time, to ſay to them that were bidden, Come, for all Things are now ready.*

18. *And they all with one Conſent began to make excuſe. The firſt ſaid unto him, I have bought a Piece of Ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it: I pray thee have me excuſed.*

19. *And another ſaid, I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excuſed.*

20. *And another ſaid, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come.*

21. *So that Servant came and ſhewed his Lord theſe Things. Then the Maſter of the Houſe being angry, ſaid to his Servant, Go out quickly into the Streets and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither the Poor, and the Maimed, and the Halt, and the Blind.*

22. *And the Servant ſaid, Lord, it is done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is room.*

23. *And the Lord ſaid unto the Servant, Go out into the Highways and Hedges, and compel them to come in, that my Houſe may be filled.*

24. *For I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe Men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my Supper.*

COMMENT.

OF many Reaſons, which might induce our Bleſſed Saviour ſo frequently to deliver himſelf in Parables, none ſeems to have been more in his View, than that of gaining hereby an Opportunity, for inſinuating unwelcome Truths, in the moſt inoffenſive Manner. To this the figurative Style of Parables did much

much contribute. It naturally engaged Attention; It avoided all that Harſhneſs of Reproof, which plain and ſimpler Language would have had; It appealed to, and left the Matter with, the Senſe of the Hearers; And it turned off the invidious Part, of drawing the Parallel, and making the Application, upon the Parties themſelves.

No Subject, of which our Lord was concerned to inform the Perſons with whom he converſed, required this Guard and Caution more, than the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Call of the *Gentiles* into the Church. Now this was an Event, not only fit to have Warning given of it; but to be foretold in ſuch a Manner, as might at the ſame Time vindicate the Juſtice of God, and lay the Blame of the Privileges loſt by it, upon the Loſers themſelves. The diſpoſing thoſe Phariſees, to whom he then addreſs'd himſelf, patiently to hear his Diſcourſe upon ſo tender a Point, moved him to repreſent it by a Parable. And the Deſign of rendring them ſenſible, how obſtinately that, once peculiar, People of God hath withſtood their own Mercy, and provoked him to take ſuch Meaſures; moved him to chooſe the Circumſtances of this Parable in particular.

Upon our Lord's Declaration, that the Acts of Friendſhip and Kindneſs, done to Perſons in no Condition of making ſuitable Returns, ſhall *be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the Juſt*; *One* of the Company, that *ſat at Meat with him*, took Occaſion to ſay, *Bleſſed is he that ſhall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God.* An Expreſſion probably in uſe among the *Jews*, to denote the Delights and Enjoyments they expected by the promiſed *Meſſiah*. This Metaphor our Lord ſo continues, as to compare the Advantages of that Kingdom, and the Extent of thoſe Advantages, to a ſumptuous Entertainment, to which great Numbers were invited; and then he ſhews, how very dif-

Ver. 14.

Ver. 15.

Ver. 16.

Ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 19, 20.

ferent

ferent Notions the greateſt Part of the Gueſts thus bidden had, from that Judgment, which this Perſon had juſtly made of the Matter. For tho' at Supper-time they received freſh and more preſſing Invitations, yet did they all ſlight the Kindneſs and the Coſt; and,

Ver. 21. with very frivolous Excuſes, unworthily abſented themſelves. The Maſter of the Houſe hereupon gives Orders to call in all thoſe of meaner Quality, throughout the whole City. And,

Ver. 22. in regard the Plenty of his Proviſion was ſufficient for a ſtill larger Company, he

Ver. 23. diſpatches yet another Meſſage, to the Highways and Hedges, to fetch in all the Outlyers, and fill his Houſe. Expreſſing at once

Ver. 24. his Goodneſs to theſe, who had not, and his juſt Reſentment of the rude Refuſals of them who had, been ſo graciouſly bidden before.

Matth. xxii. 2. Now, by comparing *This*, with a Paſſage elſewhere of very cloſe Affinity to it, we may ſee evident Reaſon to conclude, that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, the Goſpel Diſpenſation, was repreſented by it. This, as miniſtring true Plenty and Pleaſure, all that Men can want, all that they can wiſh, to render them perfectly happy, is compared to a *Supper*. The Bounty and infinite Love of Almighty God are ſignified by the *Greatneſs* of that *Supper*, and the Multitudes bidden to it. The firſt Bidding denotes all the previous Notices of the Meſſiah, by which the Law and the Prophets were intended to prepare the *Jews*, for receiving Him and His Doctrine. The Second Bidding, when all Things were ready, ſeems to import all that *Jeſus* did, and taught, and ſuffered, for their Converſion and Salvation; and all the Teſtimonies, and importunate Exhortations of his Apoſtles and Diſciples to the ſame Purpoſe. The Excuſes ſent for their Abſence, are thoſe Prejudices, and Paſſions, and worldly Intereſts, which did not only hinder thoſe *Jews* from coming into the Faith; but diſpoſed them

to

to treat all Attempts to win them over, with the moſt inflexible Obſtinacy and utmoſt Contempt. The Gueſts, brought in from abroad to ſupply their Places, are the Gentile World; to whom, after the Jews had thruſt it from them, the ſubſequent Tenders of this Grace and Salvation were made. And the declaring, that *none of thoſe that were bidden* ſhould *taſte of* this *Supper*, implies the giving thoſe *Jews* over to a reprobate Senſe, and leaving them under that Infidelity and Perverſeneſs, in which they continue hardened to this very Day.

Such is the Analogy, no doubt, of the Parable here before us. But, though its primary Intention be what you have ſeen, with regard to the different Entertainment, which the Goſpel found at its firſt ſetting out; yet have we a Part and Concern in it alſo. For by the ſame Reaſon, that they who would not receive it at all, were puniſhed for their Refuſal, ſhall every Chriſtian, who profeſſes to have received it, if he be ſlothful, or luke-warm, in the Duties of that Profeſſion, be puniſhed for his Indifference and Neglect. I have formerly, indeed frequently, urged enough, to ſhew, that a bare Acknowledgment and Belief of our Saviour's Doctrine is far from anſwering the Ends of it to us. And I think I may venture to ſay, that they, who *hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs*, hold it more by Chance, than by Choice. For the ſame Seducements, which now obſtruct their Practice, would if they had been born and educated in any other Perſuaſion, moſt probably have obſtructed their Belief, of the Chriſtian Religion.

The Miniſters of God's holy Word and Sacraments are the Servants, ſent out to invite to this Supper. Faith cometh by *Preaching*; but if Faith do not produce a Life of Piety and Virtue, agreeable to its Principles, our Preaching is vain, and your Faith is alſo vain. They therefore, upon whom the Name of Chriſt is called, are not thereby quite beyond Reach

of

of the true Import of this Parable. They may ſtill retain the vicious Diſpoſitions reprehended in it; they conſequently may incur the Sentence of Excluſion, denounced in the Cloſe of it. They actually do the one, and will certainly fall under the other; if they ſuffer the Cares, or the Pleaſures of this World, to draw them into an Indifference for, or Neglect of, the Duties of Religion, and the Concerns of Eternity. And therefore it ſhall be my preſent Endeavour, to make ſome Obſervations on this Paſſage; which may prove, and I hope (by God's Bleſſing) prevent, the Folly, and Sin, and Miſery, of ſo doing.

To make this appear as plainly, and yet as briefly, as I can, ſome Things ſhall be obſerved on the Bidder's Part, and ſome on the Perſons that are bidden.

1. On the Bidder's Part, *Firſt*, we ſhall do well to obſerve the Condition of the Perſon. Who, though not deſcribed here by any Title of Diſtinction, is yet, in another Place of like Importance and Deſign, ſet forth under the Character of a King. And this ſpeaks his marvellous Kindneſs and Condeſcenſion, which indeed is yet infinitely more amazing, when we remember, that the Great and Glorious God is meant by that King; and, that wretched ſinful Mankind are the Gueſts, invited to partake of this Supper.

Matt. xxii.

2. The Plenty and Coſtlineſs of which Supper is next to be conſidered; expreſs'd in St. *Matthew*, by his *Oxen and Fatlings being killed*; and by its being not a common Entertainment, but a *Marriage* Feaſt. Moſt ſignificant Intimations both, of the invaluable Mercy hereby figured, the Redemption of the World by the Son of God. This Son of that Great King did, in unſpeakable Humility and Love, vouchſafe to eſpouſe his Church, to join himſelf to human Nature, to put on all its neceſſary Frailties and Infirmities, to endure its Wants and Pains; that ſo he might

might exalt thoſe, whoſe Fleſh and Blood he took part of, to his own perfect Bliſs and glorious Kingdom. The vaſt Expence that King was pleaſed to be at, tho' it could not be better, is yet but poorly reſembled, by killing the choiceſt of his Herds and Flocks: For (O unſpeakable Bounty!) God ſpared not even his Son, but delivered Him up for us all: He gave him to a Life of Poverty and Affliction, Contradiction and Contempt; to a Death of Shame and Torture inexpreſſible, that his crucified Body might give Life unto the World.

The Extent of which Benefit is a *Third* Remark proper under this Head. He *bade many*, He provided indeed for All, and hath bidden All, though not all at the ſame Time, or exactly in the ſame Manner. And thus much is expreſsly affirmed by the Apoſtle, concerning that Myſtery of Love intended by this Supper, that *by the Grace of God Jeſus Chriſt was made lower than the Angels, that he ſhould taſte Death for every Man.* Heb. xi. 9. And therefore we ſhould by all Means attend,

Fourthly, To the great Care taken, for rendring the Effect of this Benefit as univerſal, as the Deſign of it. In this indeed ſome Order was obſerved, by giving earlier Notice to Some, than to Others. To the *Jews* this Redemption was many Ways prefigured and foretold: In their Country and Neighbourhood the Meſſiah made his conſtant Abode, ſcattered his Inſtructions, wrought his Miracles, offered his bloody Sacrifice, celebrated his glorious Conqueſt over Death, and made his triumphant Aſcent into Heaven. There the Apoſtles firſt publiſhed theſe glad Tidings. All which took off any juſt Imputation of God's Peculiar being neglected. But the Meſſage which began there, was never deſign'd to end there. The Commiſſion of theſe Inviters ran in the moſt general Terms.

Go ye out into all the World, Preach the Goſpel to every Creature, Baptize all Nations. Mark xvi. 15. Mat. xxviii. 19.

tions. These are the Methods, whereby those Circumstances in the Parable are answered, of *Going out into the Streets and Lanes of the City*, and then *to the Highways and Hedges.* And, as these diligent Searches, and repeated Importunities, by his Servants, testify the Earnestness of their Lord's Desire, that his *House* might *be filled:* So are the due Notices, and constant Awakenings of the Ministers of the Gospel, a sufficient Evidence of God's Good-will to Mankind in general. Which is the Argument used by St *Paul*, when he says, that *God would have all Men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.*

1 Tim. ii. 4.

Thus, on the Bidder's Part, every Circumstance conspires to magnify his Condescension, and Bounty, and vehement Desires of a general Good. All which must be of equal Weight and Force, to aggravate the Guilt and Unworthiness, of as many as refuse so gracious Offers made to them. Which yet is rendred much more heinous and unpardonable, upon the following Accounts.

1. The Nature and Meaning of the Supper, to which they are invited. Concerning this the Parable insinuates, that it was an Honour and Privilege, worthy to be preferr'd far above any of those Considerations, whereby Men were detained from it. But, in the Application, 'tis their greatest, their only Happiness; *For there is none other Name under Heaven, given unto Men, whereby they must be saved, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And we know no other Way of being saved by him; but that of being careful to live up to the Principles of his most Holy Religion, and approving ourselves virtuous in our Behaviour, as well as Orthodox in our Belief.

Acts iv. 12.

2. The Quality of the Excuses made to vindicate their absenting. Now these are such Avocations, as in themselves are lawful and innocent. They are not vicious

vicious in the Nature of the Things, and yet they are extremely ſo, in regard of that better Thing, to which they were unduly preferred, and ſo became an Obſtruction to it. Many Things there are, ſo vile and abominable, that no Allowance muſt in any Caſe be given to them: But theſe may be not only allowable, but even commendable Purſuits, in proper Time, and Place, and Meaſure. And yet our Ruin from them is inevitable, when we give them too large a Scope, and ſuffer them to take off our Eſteem and our Endeavours, from the Concerns of our Souls, and the Buſineſs of Religion.

3. The Condemnation pronounced upon theſe Refuſers, ſhews their Miſery and Excluſion to have been their own Act and Deed. And that neither the Maſter of the Feaſt was wanting in any Advances becoming Him to make: Nor they in any Degree excuſable, notwithſtanding any the moſt ſpecious Apologies, that were, or could poſſibly be, made for themſelves.

And this brings my Argument to the Point I have all along been driving at, by ſhewing the Inſufficiency of thoſe Pretences, with which ſo many Souls are deluded into Sin and eternal Deſtruction, upon Occaſion of the Cares, and Profits, and Pleaſures, of the preſent World. They imagine, that, while thoſe Cares are determined to lawful Objects, ſuch as a competent Proviſion for their own and their Family's Subſiſtence: That, provided their Profits are honeſt, and what the World, in the Way of Commerce and Dealing, counts juſtifiable and fair: That, ſo long as their Pleaſures are not manifeſtly ſinful, but keep clear of Riot and Lewdneſs, Senſuality and Brutiſhneſs, all is ſafe and well, and that God cannot be diſpleaſed, nor their Salvation brought into any manner of Hazard. They are far from ſuppoſing, that God is to have no Part of their Time and Thoughts; but they preſume he will be content with ſuch a Proportion

portion of it, as the Condition of their Affairs leaves them Leiſure for. They confeſs too, that Self-denial is a Chriſtian Virtue; but they think this Denial ſufficiently exerciſed, by confining themſelves to ſuch Satisfactions and Delights, as neither the Natural, nor the Written Law of God hath forbidden, as ſinful and impure.

But for any Thing that appears to the contrary, had not theſe Abſenters from the Feaſt before us, all this to alledge in their own Vindication? How then came they to ſuffer ſo heavy a Sentence? The purchaſing of Land, and viewing it ſo bought, the providing Yokes of Oxen and proving them, the Marriage of a Wife, are all of them blameleſs Actions, as any whatſoever. And yet each of them becomes highly blameable, when made a Cauſe of not coming to this Supper. God, by his Providence, hath obliged us to an honeſt Induſtry and Concern, for them, who becauſe they derive their Perſons and Beings from us, have a Right to depend upon a Subſiſtence from us too. He hath alſo declared that Man *worſe* than an *Infidel*, who *provides not for his own*, and *eſpecially for them of his own Houſe*; He hath intimated, that *Fathers ought to lay up for their Children*: But he hath likewiſe declared, that neither Father nor Mother, nor Wife nor Children, nor Lands, nor Life, nor any Thing muſt be loved in Compariſon of Him: That, be the Cares that encumber us what they will, ſtill there is *one Thing needful*, which muſt leaſt of all be neglected: Nay, that the Neglect of this endangers the Loſs of the reſt, for he hath promiſed too for our Encouragement, that, if we *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, all theſe Things ſhall be added unto us.*

1 Tim. v. 8.
2 Cor. xii. 14.
Luke xiv. 26.
Luke x. 41,42.
Matt. vi. 33.

The Reaſon then of this Condemnation plainly lies here; that the Men, concluded under it, were ſo keenly ſet upon the World, that, for the Sake of that, they

they chose to forego all the Advantages of the Gospel. *They made light of it*, says St. *Matthew*, and therefore *went their Way, one to his Farm, another to his Merchandise.* Because these lay uppermost in their Hearts, they had no value, either for the Promises of Grace here, or Glory hereafter. And this indeed is the Danger of Eagerness in such Pursuits; that Objects, in themselves innocent, are apt to transport us to a Degree of Desire, and Complacency, which, by diminishing our Zeal for better Things, ceases to be innocent. The Enjoyments that are sensible and present, if not very nicely guarded, will naturally gain Ground, and steal away the Affections of a Creature, compounded of Body as well as Soul. And by the same Proportions, that the present gain, the future and Spiritual will lose, the Ascendant in our Thoughts. Of this Ascendant are to be understood those Texts of Scripture, which forbid us to love the World, and command us to give the Whole of our Love to God. Not that we are to like or love nothing but him; for of such Abstractedness our Condition is not capable: But we are not to love any Thing in comparison of him, or let any Thing come in competition with him. And of this we are to give Evidence, by renouncing what would be most agreeable and beneficial to our present Circumstances, when either the attaining it, if as yet we have it not; or the keeping it, if already in our Possession; becomes inconsistent with Duty and a good Conscience. In short, God expects always to reign supreme, and that we seek, and use, and enjoy the World, with such Temper and Resignation; as never either to transgress his Laws, or to murmur at his Providence, however We, and our Affairs, shall be disposed of by him.

Chap. xxii. 5.

Let us not therefore imagine, that there is any Inconsistence between those Precepts, which command us to be industrious and careful for our own Families; and Those, which command us to serve and love God

only. For it is not by Prayer, and Hearing, and Reading, and Sacraments alone, that he is ſerved and loved; but by an honeſt Diligence in our reſpective Capacities and Callings, by every Thing that makes us uſeful to our Relations and the World, nay even by our Pleaſures and Diverſions; when all theſe are ſo ordered and reſtrained, as to expreſs an infinitely higher Regard to Him: When no Pleaſure or Profit they can bring, abates the Concern, we are required to have for our Duty: but even the Proviſion for our Body and its Delights, inſtead of ſwallowing up, is made conſtantly ſubſervient to, the Care for our Souls.

What hath been argued upon this Occaſion our own Reaſon cannot but give into. For, Who that underſtands and believes the Goſpel at all, can think, that any Allurements here below, can deſerve to be put into the Ballance with the Joys of Eternity? Who can deny Their Damnation to be moſt juſt, whoſe pretended Multitude of Buſineſs will not allow them Leiſure to be ſaved; or who ſuppoſe, that God is not moſt highly provoked, by making Religion a Thing by the by, and fit to be attended then only, when they have nothing elſe to do? Eſpecially, when this Matter is ſo tempered, as not to intrench upon any decent and neceſſary Care; as not to require the Tradeſman to forſake his Shop, or the Huſbandman his Labour; but to require *Mercy rather than Sacrifice*, and, that Men ſhould follow their Employments in ſuch Chriſtian Manner, as even by Them to ſerve themſelves and God too.

He, who is careful to do this, according to the Rules juſt now laid down, can never be unqualified to approach his God and Saviour in the moſt ſolemn Ordinances. And He, who is not careful ſo to do, it is not the Leiſure, nor the Devotions, of a Day, or a Week, or a Month, that can qualify him for ſuch Approaches. From whence you ſee, how vain and frivolous thoſe Pretences muſt needs be, by which too many think to juſtify their Neglect, as of Religious

Duties in general, ſo of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in particular. Since an honeſt and good Man, how cloſe ſoever he follows worldly Buſineſs, is always fit, and He, who is not ſuch, is never fit, to communicate. To Them, (and They, God knows, are many) who deceive their own Souls with this fond Pretence, I cannot better addreſs myſelf, than in thoſe Words of our moſt excellent Church, which have a ſpecial Regard to the Scripture now in hand: "Ye know, "how grievous and unkind a Thing it is, when a Man "hath prepared a rich Feaſt, decked his Table with all "kind of Proviſion, ſo that there lacketh nothing but "the Gueſts to ſit down, and yet they who are called "(without any Cauſe) moſt unthankfully refuſe to "come. Which of you in ſuch a Caſe would not be "moved? Who would not think a great Injury and "Wrong done unto him? Wherefore, moſt dearly "beloved in Chriſt, take ye good Heed, leſt ye, with-"drawing yourſelves from this Holy Supper, provoke "God's Indignation againſt you. It is an eaſy Matter "for a Man to ſay, I will not communicate, becauſe "I am otherwiſe hindred with worldly Buſineſs. But "ſuch Excuſes are not ſo eaſily accepted and allowed "before God. When God calleth you, are ye not "aſhamed to ſay ye will not come? They that refuſed "the Feaſt in the Goſpel, becauſe they had bought a "Farm, or would try their Yokes of Oxen, or becauſe "they were married, were not ſo excuſed, but counted "unworthy that Heavenly Feaſt." This, with more of like Importance, which I earneſtly recommend to my Reader's moſt ſerious Conſideration, we have in the *Second* Exhortation in our Communion Service; expreſſed in Terms of Piety and Affection, befitting the beſt and tendereſt of Mothers, the Church of *England*: Which God give us all Grace heartily to unite in, and ſtedfaſtly adhere to, for Jeſus Chriſt his Sake, *Amen*.

The Third SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O Lord, we beſeech thee mercifully to hear us, and grant that we, to whom thou haſt given an hearty Deſire to pray, may by thy mighty Aid be defended and comforted in all Dangers and Adverſities, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

1 *St.* Pet. v. 5.

5 *ALL of you be ſubject one to another, and be cloathed with Humility: for God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.*

5. Be obedient to Superiors, and condeſcending to all; for theſe are Virtues particularly favoured by God, as Pride, their oppoſite Vice, is particularly hateful in his Sight.

6. *Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty Hand of God, that he may exalt you in due Time:*

6. Let this Humility be the rather exerciſed, that it may produce Patience, a Virtue neceſſary for the calamitous Times now approaching:

7. *Caſting all your Care upon him, for he careth for you.*

7. In the midſt of which rely entirely upon the Wiſdom and good Providence of God; for he will not leave you deſtitute of proper Succours and Comforts.

8. *Be ſober, be vigilant; becauſe your Adverſary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.*

8. Be always upon your guard, and awake; for your Enemy is ſo, and in perſecuting Times he is like to attack you more fiercely, to terrify you, if poſſible, out of your Duty.

9. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the Faith, knowing that the ſame Afflictions are accompliſhed in your Brethren that are in the World.*

9. But if you maintain your Ground by Faith, he can get no Advantage over you: And you have leſs Reaſon to give way, when you recollect, that Perſecution is a Caſe common to Chriſtians every where.

10. *But the God of all Grace who hath called us unto his eternal Glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered awhile, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you.*

11. *To whom be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

COMMENT.

THE firſt Words of this Epiſtle are capable of a twofold Meaning. Ver. 5. They are by ſome underſtood to enjoin that Deference, due to Spiritual Paſtors and Governors: And thus the Connexion of St. *Peter*'s Diſcourſe here is very natural and cloſe, from the Beginning of the Chapter. In this Senſe, the Term *One another* means only the different Degrees or Orders of the Perſons, to whom that Reſpect and Submiſſion is accordingly due, in different Inſtances and Proportions. And for this Senſe of the *Greek* Word ἀλλήλοις, theſe Interpreters think they have St. *James*'s Authority; who, when he exhorts Men to *confeſs their Faults one to another*, cannot well be ſuppoſed to intend all Sorts of Perſons without Diſcrimination; but thoſe only, to whom ſuch Confeſſions were proper to be made; that is, the Perſons injured, or their Spiritual Guides. Chap. v. 16.

Others extend the Words a great deal farther, and interpret them of all thoſe good Offices of Courteous Behaviour, and Condeſcenſion, and Charity, which are ſo far from obliging, with regard to Superiors, only; that Equals and Inferiors have a Right to them. Thus the Subjection mentioned here is mutual and voluntary; and, as they conceive, moſt agreeable to the following Expreſſion of being *cloathed with Humility*. Upon either of theſe Senſes there can be little need of Enlargement in this Place. For, what concerns the *Former*, hath been already touched upon, in the Goſpel for the *Firſt Sunday* after *Eaſter*. And our Engagements in reſpect of the *Latter* were, I hope, ſufficiently explained and proved, from the Epiſtle of the *Second Sunday* after *Epiphany*, upon thoſe Words of St. *Paul*, *In Honour preferring one another*, *Be of the ſame Mind one toward another*, Vol. III. p. 23, 24. See Vol. II. pag. 53.

Mind not high Things, but condeſcend to Men of low Eſtate.

The original Word ἐγκομβώσασθε, which we render *be cloathed*, is of peculiar Elegance; ſignifying properly an upper Garment, girt about over the reſt, and ſuch a one, as ſome Critics have obſerved to be a Diſtinction of Servants. Hereby then the Apoſtle hath been thought to intimate, that *Humility* ought to be always viſible in Chriſtians, in every Action of our Lives to expreſs itſelf, and to be a ſignificant Mark of our belonging and retaining to Chriſt. Concerning the Excellence of this Virtue in general, and the Obligation to it from our Bleſſed Saviour's Example, ſomething hath been already, and more will be, ſpoken in due Time and Place. At preſent the Conſideration, fit to be chiefly inſiſted upon, is its Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs in afflicted Circumſtances; ſuch as the Apoſtle is here deſcribing, and ſupporting the Perſons under, to whom this Epiſtle is addreſſed.

Epiſt. for Sund. before Easter. *Goſp. for* 11 *S. after* Trin.

Now, that Humility is of ſingular Benefit, at ſuch a Time eſpecially, is very evident; whether we regard the Duties mentioned here, before, or after, this Exhortation: Thoſe we owe to our Brethren, or Thoſe to Almighty God. In reſpect of the Former; it is the moſt effectual Expedient, for containing every Man within his own Sphere; for ſecuring the Deference and Submiſſion due to Superiors, of every Sort and Capacity; and ſo for preſerving inviolate the Order, and Unity, and Peace of the Church. The Conſequences of diſturbing which are at all Times full of Danger and Miſchief; but moſt eminently and manifeſtly ſo, in a Seaſon of public Calamity, and when a common Enemy threatens us with Deſtruction. This Virtue likewiſe, above any other, diſpoſes Men to be liberal in thoſe mutual Comforts and Aſſiſtances, which, in Times of Hazard and Difficulty, are moſt wanted,

wanted, and moſt welcome. But eſpecially this Virtue is of mighty Service for preparing Men to receive from the Hands of God Ver. 5. any Events, which his Wiſdom ſhall think fit to ſend, with a becoming Reſignation of Mind. For indeed it principally conſiſts in right Notions of God, and of ourſelves; How infinitely Great, and Wiſe, and Good, and Juſt He is; and how Vile, and Poor, and Miſerable, and Sinful We are: How abſolute his Right and Dominion is over us as Creatures; and how juſt his Chaſtiſements, nay how gentle, even the moſt grievous of this preſent State muſt needs be, when inflicted upon Sinners. Theſe Reflexions thoroughly fixed in Mens Minds, are the only Foundation, upon which a true Patience and Contentedneſs can be built. And they are the proper Way of doing him Honour, when his Rod is upon us; of producing that Fruit of Holineſs and Amendment, which is the End Afflictions are deſigned to compaſs: And conſequently, they are the beſt Inducement to take off his heavy Hand, when the Corrections of it have thus accompliſhed their Work. Hence the Apoſtle obſerves, that God *reſiſts*, or, as the Word more properly ſignifies, ſets himſelf in Battle-array againſt *the Proud*. The Vindication of his Honour does indeed require, that he ſhould aſſert it againſt every bold Invader; and make them who rebel, and contemn ſo great a Majeſty, know to their Coſt, how vain and how hazardous an Attempt it is, to arrogate more to themſelves, and pay leſs to Him, than is really due. Hence again we are encouraged to *Humble ourſelves under the mighty Hand of God*, by a Proſpect of Ver. 6. his *exalting us in due Time*. It being agreeable to the Methods of the Divine Juſtice and Providence, in ſome very remarkable and exemplary Manner, to diſtinguiſh and reward that Patience and Conſtancy, which is content, not only to endure the ſharpeſt, but to acquieſce in the longeſt, of Adverſities: to refer

themſelves entirely to God's Wiſdom for their Support under them, and to his Leiſure for their Deliverance out of them. In a word, His Glory is magnified, by reducing ourſelves, in our own Opinions, to that which we really are by Nature and by Sin. This is a Sort of undoing again that Crime and Corruption, in which the Affectation of being more than God had made them, involved our firſt Parents, and their depraved Poſterity. This therefore renders us Greateſt, and Something indeed, in God's Eyes; when we are Leaſt, and Nothing, in our own.

Ver. 7. That *Care*, which the Apoſtle would have Perſons under Hardſhips *caſt* entirely *upon God*, is, no Doubt, that anxious and diſquieting Sollicitude, which diſtracts the Mind, perplexes all our Thoughts, breaks and confounds all our Meaſures; and ſo not only does more Hurt than Good, but betrays a Want of Conſideration and Religion. Such a Perplexity indeed muſt needs be very blameable; becauſe it plainly argues, that the Providence of God over all his Creatures, and his tender Concern for the Faithful in particular, make none, or much too feeble, Impreſſion upon our Souls. Of this I ſhall hereafter have Occaſion to enlarge. Mean while, that it is no Part of the Apoſtle's Intent, to ſet aſide all ſuch regular and prudent Care for our own Preſervation, as may conſiſt with a Chriſtian Dependence upon the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, is manifeſt from his proceeding to enjoin Sobriety and Watchfulneſs, Faith, and the Contemplation of the like Sufferings in our Brethren, as fit and neceſſary Duties and Remedies, for a State of Perſecution, or any other kind of Diſtreſs.

Goſp. for 15 *S. after* Trin.

Ver. 8, 9.

By *Sobriety* (I have formerly obſerved) is meant, not only a temperate Uſe of the Creatures appointed for our Suſtenance and Refreſhment; but the Government of our Paſſions and Deſires in general, with reſpect to any

Epiſt. for S. aft. Aſcenſion.

any Objects or Events whatsoever, which, in the present Life, are wont to provoke them to Violence and Excess. Without Sobriety in the former Sense, Watchfulness is impossible. For nothing beats the Powers of the Soul off their Guard, reduces us to a State of Thoughtlessness and Inactivity, and sets open the Door to all manner of Temptations, nay even furnishes Matter for those Temptations to work upon, like Gluttony and Drunkenness, Sensuality and Love of Pleasure. But Sobriety, in the latter and more extended Sense, also becomes necessary, in order to Patience and Perseverance under Afflictions; as it passes a right Estimate upon the Things of the World, and gives us a becoming Indifference for them; in comparison of those better Advantages, to which the very Want or Deprivation of these is capable of becoming highly instrumental. And, let a Man's Behaviour be never so regular, and his Life never so abstemious; till he arrive at this Moderation in his Passions and Desires, the different Events of Life may still overset him. In truth, one great End of Sobriety in the *Former* Respect, is to work our Minds up to it in this *Latter*. And Abstinence from Meats and Drinks hath by no Means done its Business; till the accustoming ourselves, in that one Instance, hath enabled us to gain the Mastery over our Appetites and Affections in any other Instances whatsoever, when Occasion shall require the Exercise of this Government.

By *Watchfulness*, no Question, is meant a continual Circumspection and Care; that we be not surprized, either through our own Neglect, or the Infirmities of our Nature. And what Excuse can be found for those Spiritual Sluggards, who fold their Hands to sleep in profound Security, when warned, that they have an Enemy to encounter, who is always awake, and keen upon his Prey? A *roaring Lion*, whose Malice is implacable; and a continual Walker about to devour, whose Endeavours for their Ruin have no Abatement or Intermission?

This

This is the general Acceptation of the Word, which yet here may perhaps have a View ſomewhat more particular and reſtrained. That Branch, I mean, of Watchfulneſs, which conſiders, and is aware, of what Importance the different Events of this Life are to the Happineſs or Miſery of the next; and what Advantages the Enemy of Souls is ever taking, to convert them to our Deſtruction. Sometimes inſinuating, and deceiving by Flattery and falſe Friendſhip, ſo turning the Serpent into a beauteous Seraph: Sometimes again diſheartening, and terrifying, with the grim Viſage and loud Yellings of a Lion: Alluring us into his Ambuſh, by the Stratagems of Pleaſure and Proſperity; or bidding us open Battle, by drawing up againſt us all his Artillery of Sufferings and Croſſes.

Ver. 9. In this Encounter, St. *Peter* tells us, all we have to do, is ſtoutly to ſtand our Ground: Supported by a vigorous Faith; and animated by the Examples of other good Chriſtians, engaged in the ſame Cauſe, and preſſed with the ſame Difficulties. Of both which Helps, and the Power of them, the Courſe of this Work hath led me to treat very lately.

Epiſt. for 1 *S. after* Eaſter.

After theſe ſeaſonable Admonitions, the Apoſtle concludes with a Prayer; which does ſo implore the good Effects, as at the ſame Time to ſuggeſt, that they are the certain Comforts and Conſequences of Afflictions rightly undergone. That theſe are every way conſiſtent with the gracious Deſign of making good Men eternally happy; *That* they are but of ſhort continuance; *That* they add Luſtre to ſuch Mens Virtue, inflame their Zeal, fix their Reſolution, qualify them for greater Undertakings, render them at laſt impregnable; and, by conforming them to the Likeneſs of a Suffering, reſemble them in the End to the Triumphs of a Victorious, Redeemer. But till this be, (which, if we do not obſtruct our own Happineſs, will not fail to

to be) let us remember, that we are Creatures and Servants, and he our Maker and Lord: Conſequently, that to us belongs Submiſſion, and Obedience, and Fidelity: To him *Power, and Glory, and Dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

The THIRD SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke XV. 1.

1. *THEN drew near unto him all the Publicans and Sinners for to hear him.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. Many Perſons of ill Fame and profligate Converſation, deſirous of Inſtruction, expreſſed their Inclination to repent and amend, by putting themſelves in the Way of our Lord's Diſcourſes, which might aſſiſt them in thoſe good Intentions.

2. *And the Phariſees and Scribes murmured, ſaying, This Man receiveth Sinners, and eateth with them.*

2. The eaſy Acceſs and favourable Reception afforded to theſe Men, the Phariſees and Scribes, according to their Superciliouſneſs, expreſſed themſelves offended with.

3. *And he ſpake this Parable unto them, ſaying,*

3. Our Lord therefore vindicates his Conduct in this Particular, by the two following Parables. The Deſign whereof being to prove, that the Converſion of wicked Sinners is highly acceptable to God; the Inference from thence is, that the Opportunities allowed for bringing that Effect about, ought not to be grudged by, or diſpleaſing to Men.

4. *What Man of you having an hundred Sheep, if he loſe one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the Wilderneſs, and go after that which is loſt, until he find it?*

4. For the Equity of which Proceeding he appeals to their own Practice, and Senſe, in Matters of much leſs Importance, in the following Manner.

5. *And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his Shoulders rejoicing.*

6. *And when he cometh Home, he calleth together his Friends and Neighbours, ſaying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my Sheep which was loſt.*

7. *I ſay*

7. *I ſay unto you, that likewiſe Joy ſhall be in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt Perſons, which need no Repentance.*

8. *Either what Woman having ten pieces of Silver, if ſhe loſe one Piece, doth not light a Candle, and ſweep the Houſe, and ſeek diligently till ſhe find it?*

9. *And when ſhe hath found it, ſhe calleth her Friends and her Neighbours together, ſaying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the Piece which I had loſt.*

10. *Likewiſe I ſay unto you, There is Joy in the Preſence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth.*

COMMENT.

THE Similitudes, whereof this Portion of Scripture principally conſiſts, are, in Subſtance and Deſign, as nearly related, as are the Applications of them, at the 7th and 10th Verſes. And theſe you find to be in Terms almoſt the ſame. The Former is that of one Sheep loſt, the Latter that of one Piece of Money miſſing, out of many. Each of theſe, being ſought with much Care and Pains, is found at laſt; with a Tranſport of Joy, proportionable to the Solicitude for its Loſs, and to the Diligence employed for retrieving it. The Sinner, in the Application, anſwers to that Sheep and that Piece of Money. The Repentance of the Sinner, to the finding either of Theſe. And, from the ſenſible Pleaſure, which Men are uſed to feel and expreſs upon ſuch Occaſions, we are directed to conclude the Degree of that Satisfaction, which ſuch Repentance brings to God, and the bleſſed Spirits above. *I ſay unto you, that likewiſe Joy ſhall be in Heaven*, (ſays the 7th Verſe) or (as the 10th) *there is Joy in the Preſence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth.* To which the 7th Verſe adds, *more than over ninety and nine juſt Perſons, which need no Repentance.*

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The Uſe I deſign to make of this Paſſage, is to lay down and explain the Argument it miniſters to wicked Men, for Repentance and Amendment of Life. For in this Senſe no doubt it was intended to encourage and ſupport thoſe Publicans and Sinners, who at this Time drew nigh in great Numbers to hear *Jeſus*. Ver. 1.

Now, by comparing the Applications with their reſpective Alluſions which went before, thoſe Arguments will appear to be principally the Three that follow.

1. *Firſt*, The miſerable Condition of a looſe and profligate Sinner before Repentance. This is eaſy to be gathered, from the Compariſons choſen to repreſent him. Both which denote the deſperate Circumſtances of ſuch Men. For they are *A loſt Sheep*, and *A loſt Piece of Money*.

By the Former of theſe, *A loſt Sheep*, are intimated the Heedleſſneſs and Folly of a Courſe of Wickedneſs. The Danger of this Sheep becoming a Prey to every Beaſt of Rapine or Deceit, to that *roaring Lion* in particular, which (the Epiſtle for this Day reminds us) *walketh about* continually, *ſeeking whom he may devour*: And not only ſo, but the Stupidity, the Perſeverance in this Wandering, and the Want of Will, or of Power, to come back again. And ſuch in Truth is the Condition of People addicted to Vice, when they have broken out of God's Fold, and forſaken the pleaſant Paſtures, which he provided for them. They grow careleſs and inconſiderate; are expoſed to, and overtaken by, Snares and Temptations every Moment: They are hardened by Cuſtom; are depraved in their Affections and Judgment; are neither diſpoſed to grow wiſer, nor of themſelves capable of conquering inveterate Habits of Evil, though they ſhould now and then ſhew ſome good Inclination to attempt it. 1 Pet. v. 8.

By the Latter of theſe Compariſons, *A loſt Piece of Money*, we are given to underſtand, that God eſteems the

the Souls of Men precious, and reckons them among his Wealth and his Treaſures. And his indeed they are: Made and formed by his own Hand; impreſſed with his own Image and Superſcription; and from that Stamp, which carries a Reſemblance to the Great King of the whole World, deriving all their Currency and Value. But, when they abandon God's Laws, and forſake the Divine and Rational Life; a Life of Goodneſs and Wiſdom, renounced for one of Senſuality and Madneſs and Miſchief: Then they are loſt. Loſt to themſelves. Loſt to God. Then this Coin is debaſed, the Impreſs obliterated and gone; and that Piece of Money as to all the Worth and Uſe of it, in a Manner, as if it were no longer in being.

It may not be amiſs, upon this Occaſion, to take a ſhort View of thoſe ſeveral Expreſſions in Scripture, by which the Holy Ghoſt hath thought fit to deſcribe the wretched Eſtate of the Perſons we are ſpeaking of. Now this is done by Stumbling and Falling, by Blindneſs and Darkneſs, by Inſenſibility and the profoundeſt Sleep, by Fears and Terrors, by Wounds and Bruiſes, by Putrefaction, and Sickneſs, and Death. The End of this Variety of Terms is, to denote the Confuſion and the Raſhneſs, the Ignorance and the Folly, the Painfulneſs and Deſpair of an ungodly Life: The wild Mazes and endleſs Labyrinths, which Sin entangles Men in; the Rocks and Precipices it thruſts them upon: The Sottiſhneſs of a debauched Underſtanding, the Headineſs of a ſeared Mind, the Stings and Agonies of a reproaching Conſcience, the Smart of Guilt, and amazing Apprehenſions of Vengeance, which the Wicked are poſſeſſed, are perplexed, are haunted with. The enfeebling of the Soul, and diſabling its nobleſt Faculties, and (with regard to any Thing that is Good) the unactive, the noiſome, the irrecoverable Miſery, which Sin reduces theſe Carcaſes of Men to. Such is the unhappy, the impotent, the forlorn, the loſt Condition of all, who have caſt off

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the Regards for God and Goodneſs; leaped over the Bounds, and burſt through the Fences, which ſhould have preſerved them in Order and Obedience, and let themſelves looſe to Appetite and Luſt, to obey Sin in its Inclinations and Suggeſtions, without Thought or Controul.

II. A *Second* Encouragement to Repentance, contained here, is from the Means, whereby Sinners attain to it; correſponding to the mighty Induſtry, uſed for recovering that ſtray Sheep, and that loſt Piece of Money. Now Repentance muſt always bear Proportion to the Guilt repented of. And, becauſe every Man's Misfortune of this Kind is not equal: Therefore the Word *Repentance* muſt needs admit of different Senſes, and the Thing itſelf of different Degrees.

Some Meaſure of it every one is obliged to; becauſe none lives without frequent Failings, and many, many Infirmities. A Lamenting of and ſtriving againſt theſe, a being ſorry for ſeveral Things that have been done, and heartily wiſhing them undone again; an Indignation againſt, and Deteſtation of, our paſt Negligencies and Miſcarriages, are Duties from which the very beſt of Men cannot be exempted. Becauſe the very beſt of Men have in ſome, in a World of, Inſtances (God knows) done amiſs, and dealt wickedly.

But they, whom the Scriptures generally, and this Portion of it in particular, characterizes by the Name of *Sinners*, are the habitual and the obdurate, the groſs and eminent Offenders. And theſe have a much harder Taſk to go through. Theirs muſt be a total Change of Heart and Converſation, a Renewal of Mind and Affections, a Recovery from mortal Sickneſs, and a riſing from Death and Corruption. All which are manifeſtly out of a Man's own Power. For as the Reſemblances, mentioned under my laſt Head, ſpeak the Miſery; ſo do both thoſe, and theſe, import the Diſability of them, whoſe Unhappineſs it hath been to fall into ſo deplorable a State. The Wandering

Sheep

Sheep is ſuppoſed not to return of itſelf; and the Piece of Money, never to be found, except the Owner ſearch for it. And hence our Bleſſed Saviour, whoſe great Deſign it was to reclaim and turn Men away from their Iniquities, does ſo often diſtinguiſh himſelf, by the Titles of a *Phyſician* to diſtemper'd Souls, and One *who came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.*

Matth. ix. 12. Luke xix. 10.

This then is a Support to dejected Sinners, that the good Shepherd follows his Stragglers into the Mountains and the Deſerts: That this careful Woman ſweeps the Houſe, and ſearches diligently for the Piece, when it is ſcattered or miſlaid. In ſhort, that their merciful Redeemer is content to be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, by cheriſhing and aſſiſting their Inclinations to do better. All in effect, left for theſe Spiritual Impotents to do, is to aſk and receive Grace and Strength, and to make uſe of it when given: To be ſatisfied with Reconciliation and Forgiveneſs, and not turn their Backs upon their own Mercy. To accept Happineſs when offered, and be glad of being found, when their Maſter ſeeks them. To return to Peace and Safety at the Shepherd's Call; to lie in his Boſom, and rejoice with him, when he vouchſafes to bring them back, pleaſed with the Burthen, and tranſported at the Recovery. Which leads me to the

III. *Third* and laſt Encouragement here. The Joy this Converſion is ſaid to create. A Joy like thoſe in the *Two Parables*, which expreſſes itſelf very ſenſibly, and is diffuſed abroad among Multitudes, who have a Concern for the Penitent's Happineſs, and God's Glory. All Heaven feels, and is full of it. *Likewiſe I ſay unto you, there ſhall be Joy in Heaven in the Preſence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt Perſons, which need no Repentance.* For the right underſtanding this Joy, ſome Caution muſt be uſed: Which I ſhall therefore, after the Example of ſome

Ver. 7, 12.

ſome learned and great Names, explain as clearly, and as briefly, as I can.

1. Firſt, For the Object of this Joy. The Repentance of a Sinner; that it ſhould affect Angels and God too, may very juſtly ſeem ſtrange. And yet that ſo it does, we have good Authority to believe, from the Words of our Bleſſed Saviour juſt now recited, and from the Correſpondence of the two Applications to their reſpective Similitudes. For there the Poſſeſſor, who recovered his Loſs, can mean none but God; as the Friends and Neighbours, to whom ſuch Joy is communicated, muſt in all Reaſon denote the Bleſſed Angels and Spirits that bear a Part in this general Gladneſs above.

2. But then, is it not yet more ſtrange, that the Degree of Joy ſhould be ſo intenſe upon this Occaſion? That one ſuch reformed Wretch ſhould raiſe it, above the Safety of Many Souls, who never fell ſo foully, nor provoked any contrary Paſſion ſo highly? That the ninety-nine Sheep, which never ſtrayed, ſhould excite leſs of it, than one poor ſilly Wanderer? And yet, that thus in fact it is, we are aſſured, from the following Parable of the returning Prodigal; from the Reſt of the Flock being left behind in the Wilderneſs; and from the expreſs Application of our Bleſſed Maſter. For he, as we have ſeen, makes no Difficulty to affirm the Joy in Heaven to be greater, upon the Account of One ſuch Inſtance of a reclaimed Penitent, than for a great many, who having never been ſo bad, never ſtood in need of ſo ſtrict and painful a Repentance. Theſe Circumſtances, and the Reaſon of them, deſerve our very ſerious Attention. Ver. 11. *to the End.*

1. Now, as to the Angels; although we are but little acquainted with their Condition, and the Ingredients of their Happineſs; yet thus much the Scripture hath informed us concerning them, that *they are miniſtering Spirits, ſent out to miniſter for them that ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*; Heb. i. 14. Matth. xviii. 10.

Salvation; and that Children both in the Natural and Spiritual Capacity, have thoſe which are ſtyled their *Angels*. Thoſe Spirits then may very reaſonably, and ſeem generally to be thought full of Tenderneſs for their Charge, ſolicitous for their particular Safety, and extremely glad of any Good that befals them. How theſe heavenly Hoſts were affected with the Salvation of Mankind in general, is evident, from the Hymn, with which they attended at the Birth of Chriſt, to welcome him into the World. As alſo from their conſtant earneſt Deſire of contemplating the Myſtery of our Redemption. Every Occaſion then of this Kind may be glad Tidings to them. And, though their Nature be far diſtant from us Mortals, and their Bliſs exquiſite, beyond what we are able to conceive; yet, in regard both their Nature and their Bliſs are finite, their Joy may certainly admit of an Increaſe. And, as often as a Sinner is converted from the Evil of his Ways, there may ſpring up a freſh Object, and a large and literal Addition to it.

1 Pet. i. 12.

But, can this properly be ſaid of God too, whoſe Perfection of Happineſs allows no ſuch Accumulations? No, doubtleſs. And therefore, with reſpect to him, we muſt interpret this, as Religion and Reaſon oblige us to underſtand many like Paſſages, where Human Parts and Paſſions are attributed to him. All which is done, that, by ſuch condeſcending Reſemblances, he might the better manifeſt himſelf to the Weakneſs of our Capacities. As therefore the Holy Ghoſt, meaning to repreſent his Diſpleaſure and our Baſeneſs, does it, by ſaying, that we *provoke him to Anger*, *kindle his Fury*, *grieve* and *weary* his Spirit, and the like: So here, by ſaying, that God *rejoiceth* over a Repenting Sinner, is intended, that ſuch Repentance is highly agreeable to him. And, were his Nature capable of the ſame unequal Motions with ours, the Joy of a Father, or a Friend, for retrieving the Perſon he loves beſt, and had been moſt in pain for,

for, would be but a feeble and very faint Image of that Satisfaction, which this excites in him, who loves us better than the tendereſt Parent, or moſt affectionate Friend upon Earth does, or can do.

But ſtill, it may be urged, Why ſo partial in this Love? Why *the fatted Calf killed* for the Prodigal, when he, who paid a conſtant Duty to his Father, never had ſo much as a *Kid given him* to make *merry with his Friends?* If ſome, nay if great Joy be juſt for one, yet ought it to be greater for one, than for ninety and nine? For one once Bad, than for ſo many always Good? Or ſhall we ſay, 'tis better to ſin and afterwards repent, than not to ſin at all, ſo as ſhall need ſuch Repentance? This Difficulty ſtill remains to be conſidered.

Now we are to remember, that God hath declared, *All Souls are mine, the Soul that ſinneth, it ſhall die.* Implying, that all Mankind are, by Nature, equally related to God; and that the Diſtinctions he makes between one Man and another, are upon the Account of Virtue and Vice. If then the ſtray Sheep be ſought, and the Reſt in Appearance neglected in the mean while; it is not, that the Shepherd hath a particular Fondneſs for that Sheep above the Reſt; for he would have done the ſame for any of them under the ſame Circumſtances. Judge by yourſelves. When one Child in a Family is ſick, does a tender Mother watch with this alone, becauſe ſhe loves it moſt? No, but becauſe as Matters then ſtand, this requires her Care moſt. So again, when that Care hath been ſucceſsful, the Joy riſes, in Proportion to the Fears and Hazards now got over. The Father's Reply in the End of this Chapter comes home to our Caſe; *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine; it was meet we ſhould make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again, he was loſt, and is found.* Therefore neither is this Part to be too rigorouſly underſtood; but as ſpoken after the Manner of Men.

Ezek. xviii. 4.

Ver. 31, 32.

And the Reſentments of Men are evidently raiſed, by the Greatneſs of a Change from the contrary. Thus Sickneſs and Pain and Danger give a more ſprightly Reliſh of Safety and Eaſe and Health. The Surprize of an Eſcape which we did not expect, and the Regaining of a Treaſure we had given for gone, is entertained with Tranſport and Rapture; becauſe this gives it us afreſh, it is a Kind of new Acceſſion to our Fortunes, and like a Thing we never enjoyed before. And ſuch is the Caſe of Men immerſed in a diſſolute and debauched Life: An ample ſubject of Pleaſure, and even of Wonder, when they are *recovered from the Snare of the Devil*, who were long uſed to be *taken Captive by him at his Will.* This is a new Conqueſt, and enlarging of Chriſt's Dominion, an Addition made to the Number of the Bleſſed, and an Example, of noble Influence, for encouraging others to ſhake off their Chains.

2 Tim. ii. 26.

Some other Reaſons might be alledged, but I confine myſelf to this, becauſe it alone ſeems ſufficiently to anſwer the Extent and Deſign of the Parables before us.

Thus we have conſidered the Joy in Heaven over a repenting Sinner: How it is to be underſtood; and how deſervedly this Occaſion calls for it. And, what can more encourage to Repentance, than theſe Conſiderations? How could Men indeed hold out in their Folly and Perverſeneſs, did they but in good Earneſt attend to them? When St. *Paul* exhorts the *Philippians* to Virtue, he begs them to comply for his Sake, and that they would *fulfil his Joy.* And certainly ſome Regard is due to them, who labour for, and watch over, your Souls; to let them reap this Comfort, this Fruit at leaſt, of ſeeing that their Endeavours to do good have not been all in vain. But at preſent this is a mean Enforcement. And I do not ſay to the Sinner *Fulfil our Joy*, but fulfil the *Joy of God and his holy Angels.* For God and his holy Angels will applaud your Change, and triumph in your

Ch. ii. 2.

your Deliverance. They are ſo zealouſly concerned for, ſo tenderly affected with, your Happineſs; that no Compariſon, no Paſſion of the like Kind upon Earth, can equal the raviſhing Senſe of it.

If the Apprehenſion of Miſery in preſent, and the Certainty of Worſe hereafter, than any in preſent can be, will awaken you; reflect ſeriouſly upon my firſt Argument, your ſad and deſperate Condition. Deſperate, if continued in, and impoſſible to be forſaken by your own ſingle Strength.

But then remember, *Secondly*, that there is one at hand, who will carry you on his Shoulders, and vanquiſh all Difficulties; if you will but concur in working out this Freedom from Bondage, and accept of a Reſcue from Deſtruction. And is it poſſible, Men ſhould be fond of Ruin? When Calamities lie heavy, nothing, one would think, ſhould detain any in that State, but the Impoſſibility of throwing off the Load. Now even that Objection is removed, and the Sinner's Eſcape does not ſtick there. His Shepherd ſeeks him, and wiſhes he would be found. He need but conſent to be happy, and the Work is done. The making of his Fortune is put in his own Power, and the ſecuring not his own only;

But *Thirdly*, the diffuſing a Participation of his Joy, through a whole World of glorified Spirits. He may make Heaven yet more Heaven, by doing a Thing ſo very delightful to God and all the Inhabitants there, that the tendereſt Terms are not thought too expreſſive, of their Sollicitude for his Danger, of their Deſire of his Good, and of their Pleaſure in his Salvation.

So bleſſed a Thing it is to return to our Fold, to reſtore to Chriſt that Treaſure, which he bought at the Expence of his own Blood. Oh let him have the Benefit of his Purchaſe, and ſuffer not the Price of that Life to be loſt, nor that Blood to be ſpilt in vain, as to your own Particular!

To conclude in a Word. Joy there will be ſomewhere, let us act how we pleaſe. Only 'tis at our Choice, whether this ſhall be the Joy of Devils inſulting us in Torments; or the Joy of God and Angels congratulating their own and our unſpeakable Felicity to endleſs Ages. And the Odds between theſe is ſo great, the Difference ſo plain; that, if we had not to deal with a Generation that have no Knowledge, it might look like an Affront to the common Senſe of Mankind, to deſire, that they would *adviſe and ſee which* of the Two *they will chooſe, that God may do it unto them.*

The FOURTH SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

Pſal. xxxvii. 39, 40.
John xv. 4, 5.
2 *Cor.* iii. 5.
—iv. 18.

O GOD the Protector of all that truſt in thee, without whom nothing is ſtrong, nothing is holy: Increaſe and multiply upon us thy Mercy; that thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may ſo paſs through Things temporal, that we finally loſe not the Things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Rom. viii. 18.

18. The Sufferings I mention (*Ver.* 17.) how ſharp ſoever, are yet rendered very ſupportable, by the certain Proſpect of that glorious Reward, to be hereafter obtained, and to which they bear no Manner of Proportion.

18. *I Reckon that the Sufferings of this preſent Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which ſhall be revealed in us.*

19. *For*

19. *For the earneſt Expectation of the Creature waiteth for the Manifeſtation of the Sons of God.*

19. For this, which ſhall one Day prove us to be the Sons of an immortal God, Mankind in general, eagerly expect.

20. *For the Creature was made ſubject unto Vanity, not willingly, but by Reaſon of him who hath ſubjected the ſame in Hope.*

20. For all Mankind is become liable to Corruption, not by Choice, but through the juſt Diſpenſation of God, who hath inflicted Death upon them: Yet this not without End or Hope:

21. *Becauſe the Creature itſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the Bondage of Corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God.*

21. For a Time is coming, when this Death ſhall be ſucceeded by a happy Immortality, and this Effect of *Adam*'s Sin taken off from his Poſterity.

22. *For we know that the whole Creation groaneth, and travelleth in Pain together until now.*

22. The Senſe and Burden whereof at Preſent lies ſo heavy, that the Apprehenſions of it, and the Afflictions of the preſent Life, are like ſo many Labour-throws and Pangs toward that better Life.

23. *And not only they, but ourſelves alſo, which have the Firſt-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourſelves groan within ourſelves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.*

23. Of which we, who have received the Goſpel and Grace of Chriſt, have likewiſe our Share; and with great Earneſtneſs do long for the Evidence and Completion of our Sonſhip, even the final reſcuing of theſe mortal, and now afflicted, Bodies from Death and Corruption; and their Admiſſion into our eternal Inheritance with Chriſt, in the Kingdom of his and our Father.

COMMENT.

I Shall not trouble my Reader with the great Variety of Conſtructions, which learned Men have put upon this Scripture. But, having in my Paraphraſe ſet down that, which, in my Apprehenſion, is as reaſonable and as natural as any, will endeavour to render it plain and uſeful; by diſcourſing briefly upon it.

Epiſt. for 8 *S. after* Trin.

Not to look back into the foregoing Parts of this Chapter, (the Connexion whereof I ſhall ſhortly be obliged to conſider) let it ſuffice to obſerve, that upon mention of our being *joint Heirs with Chriſt*, the Apoſtle ſignified, that being likewiſe *joint Sufferers* with him is a Condition of obtaining that Inheritance. Which being a Privilege diſtant and unſeen, and ſo under ſome Diſadvantage, when put into the Balance with Afflictions ſenſible and preſent; St. *Paul* does here prove the Reaſonableneſs of being well content with ſubmitting to this Condition, by ſeveral Arguments.

1. *Firſt*, From his own Authority and certain Knowledge. For that Word, *I reckon*, is not, as we ſometimes uſe it in our Language, a Form of Speech importing ſome Remains of Doubting, or the giving an Opinion cautiouſly, with a Reſerve of Deference for others of a different Judgment: But it carries the Signification of a Perſuaſion, as ſtrong and peremptory, as can poſſibly be entertain'd. It implies the having ſtated an Account, conſidered all Matters nicely; the Sufferings, the very worſt of this preſent Time, on the one Part; the Glory, the not yet revealed Glory, on the other Part: And, after all reaſonable Allowances and Deductions made, upon a fair and exact Computation of the whole, St. *Paul* pronounces the Latter ſo vaſtly ſuperior to the Former; that it is an Indignity done to it, ſo much as to Name them together; or to ſuppoſe a Proportion between them, capable of forming a Compariſon upon.

λογίζομαι.

'Tis true, this Glory is not yet *revealed* in us. We neither enjoy it, nor have a diſtinct and adequate Notion of it. But I have ſhew'd long ſince, that this is far from any Argument, for abating our Value, or cooling our Zeal in the Purſuit of it. We know it is prepared, and we may know, that its Excellence, and our Infirmities, are the true Reaſons, why we continue ſo much in the

Epiſt. 6 *S. after* Epiph.

the Dark about it. We know, that it is Perfect; that it is All, and above all, that can be wiſh'd or thought: Whereas our preſent Sufferings are partial, and never deſtitute of ſome Allay to, or Support under them. In a Word, we know, that This is Uninterrupted and Eternal: but Experience plainly demonſtrates, that moſt of our Sufferings have comfortable Intervals; and that all we can poſſibly ſuffer, muſt quickly have an End.

Theſe Conſiderations alone do more than ſuffice to juſtify the Apoſtle's Eſtimate now before us: But he proceeds to make it good,

Secondly, By the common Senſe and Wants of Mankind in general. This ſeems to be the Meaning of the *Four* following Verſes: For the *Manifeſtation of the Sons of God* denotes that Reſurrection of the Body, and Immortality of the whole Man, which is a Privilege entirely owing to Chriſt, and an Operation, effected by the Power of that Almighty Spirit, which raiſed him from the Dead. And, though it cannot be affirmed, that all Mankind have conſtantly, and every where, entertained a firm and poſitive Perſuaſion of ſuch an Immortality: Yet have ſome dark and indiſtinct Preſages of, and Wiſhes for it been ſo general, as juſtly to be eſteemed a Dictate of Nature. Indeed, the more careful Men have been to cultivate and improve the Principles of Reaſon; the more vigorous and lively have ſuch Impreſſions been upon their Minds. This is abundantly manifeſt from the Writings of Some, who never enjoyed the Benefit of Revealed Religion; and conſequently, who could not be led into ſuch Expectations, by thoſe Prejudices of Education, to which too many, who wrongfully uſurp that Name, are not aſhamed to attribute the Chriſtian's Hope of a Future State. They rightly obſerved, that the Soul of Man gave many Indications of a Principle, nobler than Matter. They conſidered, how far ſhort any Enjoyments, attainable in this Life, are of ſatisfying

fying the Largeneſs of its Capacities and Deſires. They felt a continual Inclination within, to look beyond the narrow Limits of Duration, to which its preſent Abode in the Body is manifeſtly reſtrained. They ſaw and lamented the Mixture, the very unequal Mixture, of Bitter, caſt into every Man's Cup; and from hence they were apt to conclude, that God had ſome better Thing in reſerve for ſo excellent a Creature; and, that his Wiſdom and Goodneſs would never have endued Man with Qualifications for an Happineſs peculiar to a Rational Being, without ſome Proviſion for his Attainment of it. And therefore, though they could not account for the Manner and Circumſtances of the Thing; yet they ſupported themſelves under all Temporal Evils, with the Thought of ſome Amends to be made for their Virtue and Patience. Amends, which Experience convinced them Good Men could not depend upon here; and ſo the ſame Arguments, which perſuaded them of the Congruity of ſuch a Recompence, were ſo many Preſumptions and Evidences of another State, wherein they were to expect and receive them in full Payment. Theſe ſeem to be the *earneſt* Longings, the melancholy Senſe of their *Bondage to Corruption*, the *Hopes of Liberty*, the *Groaning and Travellings in Pain*, meant by St. *Paul*, in the Scripture now before us. All of conſiderable Weight, in this Subject of a Happineſs to come; by which the *Sufferings of this preſent Time* ſhould be amply compenſated. But all theſe receive a vaſt Addition of Strength from a

II. *Second* Argument, added at the *Twenty-third* Verſe; which is, The Concurrence of Chriſtians in the ſame Opinions and vehement Expectations. *And not only They, but Ourſelves alſo*, &c. One great Deſign of the Goſpel was to rectify our Notions of Things; to ſet the Judgment right in Points of Speculation; and to direct the Affections and Deſires to Objects, which

which were not only in being, but had an Excellence and Tendency to our Happineſs, worthy of our Love and Purſuit. Hence it is eaſy to diſtinguiſh, what Apprehenſions and Appetites were really from pure Nature; and what crept in, and prevailed, upon the Depravation of Nature. Of the latter Sort are Thoſe, which the Goſpel hath condemned, as falſe and groundleſs; or which it hath any where forbidden, as vicious and hurtful. Of the former, we may depend upon it, are all ſuch, as the Goſpel hath explained more clearly, confirm'd more fully, or enforced more advantageouſly. For Revelation and Natural Reaſon are both of them from God; they are only two different Methods of ſignifying his Will and Truth to us. And therefore, when Scripture bears Teſtimony to any Opinion, ſuggeſted by Reaſon before; this gives it a freſh Evidence and Sanction, and ſhews it to have been a *Plant of our Heavenly Father's planting.*

It was therefore for St. *Paul*'s Purpoſe, to prove This to have been the Caſe, with a future State, and the bliſsful Rewards of it. That even the Heathens were not deſtitute of ſome Apprehenſions and Expectations of it; and, that the *Life and Immortality*, of which They had ſome faint Glimpſes only, *Jeſus Chriſt hath* now *by the Goſpel* fully *brought to light*. That the *Graces* and Illuminations of the *Spirit* produce the ſame Longings and Groanings, with the Impreſſions of true Original Nature. Nay, that Theſe are more vehement, in proportion to the Increaſe of the Knowledge and Aſſurance we now have. That very Spirit being a Mark of our Sonſhip, and Earneſt of our Inheritance; a *Firſt-fruit*, enſuring and repreſenting the plenteous Harveſt, which They who *faint not*, nor give out from labouring, will not fail *in due Time to reap*. And conſequently *the Glory that ſhall be revealed*, is a moſt powerful Argument, for enduring

2 Tim. i. 10.

Gal. vi. 9.

with

with Conſtancy and Meekneſs, *thoſe Sufferings of this preſent Time*; to which, how ſharp ſoever, that Glory is ſo infinitely an Overbalance, as, upon a fair and due Calculation, to be injured and diſhonoured, by being ſo much as brought into any Compariſon with them. God grant us Grace to conſult, not our Duty only, but our Intereſt and Happineſs, by ſeriouſly laying to Heart this vaſt Inequality. Which would not only ſoften, and ſupport us under, any Afflictions that can poſſibly befal us; but curb and conquer that ſlaviſh Fear of Death, of all Paſſions the moſt tyrannical and tormenting. A Paſſion, which nothing, but this Perſuaſion throughly imbibed, can be a Match for; by enabling us to conquer it as Chriſtians, though we cannot wholly ſuppreſs and remove it as Men.

The Fourth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

St. Luke vi. 36.

36. Let the univerſal Goodneſs of Almighty God be the Pattern for your Affection and Behaviour toward all Men, even your Enemies.

36. *BE ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful.*

37, 38. Beware of unneceſſary and uncharitable Cenſures, for God will order Matters ſo, that your Tenderneſs and your Severity in theſe Reſpects ſhall be paid back to you, each in its kind.

37. *Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged: condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned; forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven:*

38. *Give, and it ſhall be given unto you; good Meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall Men give into your Boſom. For with the ſame Meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.*

39. Be not ſeduced by the Phariſees, and their falſe corrupt Traditions, but follow the true Light, which I am guiding you with in theſe Inſtructions.

39. *And he ſpake a Parable unto them, Can the Blind lead the Blind? ſhall they not both fall into the Ditch?*

40. *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter: but every one that is perfect ſhall be as his Maſter.*

40. And if any one of them ſeem harſh, remember that I your Maſter have ſubmitted to them before you.

41. *And why beholdeſt thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, and perceiveſt not the Beam that is in thine own Eye?*

42. *Either how canſt thou ſay to thy Brother, Brother, let me pull out the Mote that is in thine Eye, when thou thyſelf beholdeſt not the Beam that is in thine own Eye? Thou Hypocrite, caſt out firſt the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye.*

41, 42. Then, with regard to the Cautions I gave you againſt Cenſoriouſneſs in particular; Conſider how abſurd it is, to be ſevere upon the Failings of others, in them who have much greater of their own. Certainly no Man is fit to reprehend his Brother, who all the while ſtands liable to the ſame or greater Reproach, and hath not taken Care to amend himſelf.

COMMENT.

WHAT Sort and Degree of Mercy is here required of us, the Verſes next before, and the Parallel Paſſage in Saint *Matthew*, ſufficiently explain. It is ſuch, as does not reſtrain our Affection and good Offices, to Perſons, from whom we either have received, or may reaſonably expect the like: But ſuch as forgives our very Enemies, forgives ſo as to love them, loves ſo as to do them good, liberally and chearfully. Such, as conforms our Practice to the Example of that Father in Heaven, who grudges not the daily Returns of Sun and Rain, the Bleſſings and Conveniences of Life, to them who daily provoke him to Anger, and forfeit all Pretenſion to any of thoſe Numberleſs Benefits, which are yet perpetually flowing down upon them, from this Fountain of all Goodneſs. Such, in a word, as may carry this Virtue as high as it can poſſibly go; and render us in that regard *perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect.*

Chap. v. 44, 48.

Comp. Matt. v. 28.

Such

Such is the Deportment Chriſtianity expects, even where Offences and Injuries are manifeſt and flagrant. Much more does it oblige us, not to aggravate or reſent the Actions of others, by unjuſt Jealouſies, and hard Miſconſtructions. The Tendency whereof to render all Converſation uneaſy, and to deſtroy Peace, and Charity, and mutual good Underſtanding, is ſo natural; as abundantly to illuſtrate the Connexion between the Command at the 36th, and the Prohibition immediately following at the 37th Verſe. For, what can be of greater Importance to promote Love and Mercy, than the reducing our Judgments of Men and their Actions to true and proper Meaſures; Upon theſe depend the good or Ill Impreſſions, we receive of our Brethren. Thoſe Impreſſions influence, and indeed have the commanding Stroke in forming our whole Deportment. And therefore it may be proper to obſerve the very particular Care taken by the Chriſtian Religion, to correct this Vice of Cenſuring and Judging; than which, (as lamentable Experience too plainly demonſtrates) there is ſcarce any more miſchievous, and yet more common and predominant, in the whole World.

To this purpoſe we are ſometimes urged with the Boldneſs and Injuſtice of it, as uſurping an Authority, which no Way belongs to us. *Speak not Evil of one another*, (ſays St. *James.*) *He that ſpeaketh Evil of his Brother, and judgeth his Brother, ſpeaketh Evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law. And if thou judge the Law, thou art not a Doer of the Law, but a Judge. There is one Law-giver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy. Who art thou that judgeſt another?* Such a Man, in the Apoſtle's Senſe, ſets himſelf up above that Rule, which it is his Duty to be governed by. He invades a Character, which God hath reſerved as his own Peculiar. For, as He alone hath Authority to preſcribe and impoſe our Duty; ſo He alone hath

Jam. iv. 11, 12.

Power

Power to pass Sentence, and inflict Punishment, upon our Violation of it.

Sometimes again we find it represented, as an Encroachment, not to be indured, upon the independent Freedom of our Brethren. Thus St. *Paul*, upon mention of the hard Censures Men are apt to pass upon difference of Judgment or Practice, with regard to Things in their own Nature indifferent, expostulates with those of a contrary Principle by asking, *Why is my Liberty judged of another Man's Conscience?* And elsewhere, *Every one of us shall give Account of himself to God, let us not therefore judge one another any more.* Which Passages do likewise seem to insinuate the Rashness and Injustice, of deciding a Cause, of which sufficient Matter does not appear in Evidence, and consequently such, as we cannot possibly arrive at a perfect Knowledge of.

1 Cor. x. 29.

Rom. xiv. 12, 13.

At other Times the Arguments made use of for deterring us, are the many mischievous Consequences of this Practice. To the Party censured, as it lessens and takes from him, in the Esteem, not of ourselves only, but of as many more, as our Opinions or Reflexions find any Credit with. To the Community, as it disturbs the Quiet and Comforts of Society; sows the Seeds of Hatred and Contention, of Envy and Revenge; propagates ill Thoughts and slanderous Reports, and commits insufferable, and oftentimes irreparable, Outrages upon the Reputation of innocent Persons. Hence we are told, that *The Whisperer separateth chief Friends*; that *the Mouth that slandereth, slayeth the Soul*; that *the Words* of such Men *are as Wounds, and go down into the innermost parts of the Belly*; And that, *He who scatters them, and says, I am in sport, is as a Mad-man, that casteth about Firebrands, and Arrows, and Death.*

Prov. xvi. 28. — xviii. 8. — xxvi. 18, 19. Wisd. i. 11.

But,

But, if the Reverence due to Almighty God will not reſtrain us from aſſuming his Right of Judicature; if the Conſideration of common Equity will not keep us modeſt, in Matters that do not lie before us, and cannot, by our moſt accurate Obſervation, be competently known; if the Evils, that follow this wicked Diſpoſition and Practice, cannot move us to compaſſion for the poor Sufferers, or Tenderneſs to Mankind in general; yet behold here one Argument, which ſhould at leaſt, and one would hope could, not fail of with-holding us; and that is, Intereſt, and the dear Love of ourſelves: The delivering our own Actions from being rigorouſly proceeded upon, and, by our Candour and good Nature to other People, engaging a Return, and as it were laying in before-hand a Stock of Favour for ourſelves, when we, as all Men ſometimes do, miſcarry. This is the Conſideration preſſed by our Bleſſed Lord, *Judge not, and Ye*

Ver. 37. *ſhall not be judged: Condemn not, and Ye ſhall not be condemned: Forgive, and Ye ſhall be forgiven.* Intimating that, as they who ſhew Mercy ſhall be ſure to find it; ſo they, who ſhew none, ſhall have Juſtice without Mercy. And thus the Proverb mentioned in the next Verſe, ſhall be verified in both Senſes; as well on the diſadvantageous and ſevere, as on the kind and beneficial Part. *For with the ſame Meaſure Men mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to them again.*

Vol. I. p. 86. Now, by not *Judging and Condemning* (as I had Occaſion formerly to take notice) is plainly meant an Inſtance of that Mercy, recommended juſt before in general Terms, as a neceſſary Imitation of our Heavenly Father's Goodneſs. Conſequently, this cannot poſſibly extend ſo far, as to forbid all trying and ſentencing of Criminals, by a Legal and Public Authority. For theſe Judicatures upon Earth are an Image of His Great Tribunal above; the Perſons ſitting upon them

Pſal. lxxxii. 6. are ſtiled *Gods* for that Reaſon; and, as

He

He in Heaven is a juſt Judge, without any Derogation from his Mercy; ſo his Vicegerents here below, both Sacred and Civil, inflict Cenſures and Puniſhments, without any Breach of that Gentleneſs and Love, which the Chriſtian Religion requires. The Scriptures accordingly furniſh frequent Examples of, and ſtated Rules for, ſuch Men, in their Behaviour and Proceedings; Proceedings, which, in the very Deſign of them, are Acts of Mercy, by giving a Check to exorbitant Wickedneſs and Wrong. So that the Judgment and Condemnation here muſt be confined to that, which private Perſons take upon them to exerciſe, without any Right or Call: Such as tends to diſturb the Peace of Mankind, and deſtroys that Charitable Temper, which is neceſſary for the Support of it. Whereas the Public and Authoritative Judging conduces to the Preſervation and Advancement of both; and is a Defence and Charity to the Innocent, though an Inſtrument of Severity to the Guilty and Obnoxious.

Again. Neither is it abſolutely, and upon all Occaſions, unlawful, even for private Perſons to *judge* and *condemn* the Principles or Practices of their Brethren. Had it been ſo, our Lord would not have left us (as he hath done in this very Chapter, and other Places of Scripture) Rules to diſtinguiſh, and to judge them by. For, when thus taught to pronounce of the Tree by its Fruits, if thoſe ſhall be found manifeſtly corrupt, we are equally forbidden to call Evil Good, as to call Good Evil. But in this Caſe too, great Integrity and great Tenderneſs are to be uſed. We are not to condemn without ſtrong and clear Evidence; We are not to do it officiouſly; We are not to do it ſpightfully: Not out of a Deſign to render Men odious, and their Character deſpicable, rather than to ſerve any good Purpoſe. We may diſcern the Faults and Failings of others, in order to beware of and avoid them ourſelves. We may diſcover them to our Acquain-

tance and Friends, in order to prevent their being ſeduced by the ill Example. We may lay them open to, and expoſtulate the Matter with, the Offenders themſelves, in proſpect of their Admonition and Amendment. But we are not allowed this, to gratify a buſy and meddling Curioſity, to furniſh Diſcourſe for every impertinent Viſit, to deſtroy their Reputations wantonly and unprofitably, or to triumph over their Weakneſſes. So that the *Judging* before us is ſuch, as proceeds from Raſhneſs, and Rigour, and Pride, and Partiality. And the *Condemning* is that, which is the Effect of Envy and Ill-nature, of a malicious, uncharitable, and altogether unchriſtian Diſpoſition.

Goſp. 22 Sunday after Trin.

The *Forgiving* here, as it ſignifies paſſing by Injuries, together with the Argument enforcing it, will have its proper Place of being conſidered hereafter. At preſent I ſhall ſpeak to it under a more reſtrained Senſe; which ſeems to come cloſer up to the Matter laſt in hand, and is more immediately and directly oppoſed to the *Judging and Condemning*, as now interpreted. By this then I would chooſe to underſtand a Readineſs to abſolve Men from the Scandal or Suſpicion of Guilt imputed to them, when probable Circumſtances concur fairly to clear them of it. Not retaining a Jealouſy, or diſadvantageous Opinion, which hath been once entertained, in deſpight of proper Vindications and Proofs to the contrary: but manifeſting the ſame Readineſs and a much greater Satisfaction, in believing and aſſerting the Innocence of our Brethren, than ever we had done to call it into Queſtion. In ſhort, our Prejudices ſhould be let go again, at leaſt as eaſily as they were taken up: And all fair Allowances ſhould conſtantly be made, which the Man and his Caſe can poſſibly admit. And this muſt be done, even in thoſe Actions, whereby we think ourſelves aggrieved and injured; and to thoſe very Perſons who have already given us Reaſon to look upon them as our Enemies.

The

The Judgment and Condemnation, which it is promiſed here we ſhall eſcape, by this Tenderneſs and Candour, may be either *That* of Men, or *That* of Almighty God.

For *That* of Men, *Firſt*, They, who put themſelves forward, and are ſevere in cenſuring their Neighbours, take the moſt effectual Courſe of preparing a Scourge for their own Backs; and, in a very literal Senſe, procure and lay up for themſelves *good Meaſure, preſſed down, ſhaken together, and running over.* For the World is ſeldom behind-hand in ſuch Retaliations. Scandal is then eſteem'd Self-Defence, and a juſt Revenge, which takes effectual Care, that the Aggreſſor ſhall have his own Severity paid back again, not only in full Tale, but with exorbitant Intereſt. On the other Hand, the Man of Diſcretion, and Reſerve, and Good-Nature, who aſperſes nobody, nor intermeddles with Matters that concern him not; who puts the beſt Conſtruction upon every Thing, and allows all People their due Commendation; is much more ſafe from the Laſh of ill Tongues, and beſpeaks the Juſtice and favourable Treatment of all that know him. So exceedingly malicious indeed is the World, that even this Man muſt not flatter himſelf, with the Privilege of ſtanding quite clear of Cenſure and Miſrepreſentation. But he hath this Advantage, that, when Obloquy and Detraction attempt upon his Honour, the Slander is ſcattered with leſs Bitterneſs, received with leſs Delight, and ſuffered with leſs Regret and Self-Reproach; than it muſt needs be, where a Man's own Conſcience tells him, that he hath given others juſt Provocation to make Repriſals upon his good Name, and, by his own hard Dealing, hath deſerved to be thought and uſed as a common Enemy. Ver. 38.

2. But then, *Secondly*, and eſpecially, here is the Judgment and Condemnation of God to be regarded.

'Tis true, in this reſpect, Men may depend upon it, that they ſhall not upon all Accounts be dealt with ſo ill, as they are wont to give themſelves a Liberty of dealing with one another. For his *Judgment*, we are aſſured, will be *according to Truth*; and ſo without any Mixture, either of that involuntary Error, or that deliberate Falſhood, which Men too generally make no Scruple to be guilty of, in their Repreſentations, and invidious Characters.

Rom. ii. 2.

But herein conſiſts the Advantage of the Charitable Man, that God will judge him according to his Diſpoſition; and overlook, and be as kind to, His Failings, as he hath been ſparing of, and tender to, thoſe of his Brethren. Whereas to the Rigid, and Cenſorious, and Bitter, he will mete their own Meaſure exactly, and go to the Extremity of Juſtice. And ſurely this is Diſcouragement and Terror enough in all Conſcience; to reflect, that by giving a Looſe to a Licentiouſneſs of Thought and Tongue, we muſt expect to find no more Kindneſs from God, than Men have found from Us. For, if God *enter into Judgment with his Servants, no Fleſh living can be juſtified in his Sight:* And if He will *be extreme to mark what is done amiſs*, where is the Man able to *abide it?*

Pſal. cxiii. 2.
— cxxx. 3.

Leaſt of all are thoſe Men qualified to abide it, whoſe critical Obſervation, and inhuman expoſing of other People, is here inſinuated by our Lord himſelf, to be an Effect and Mark of their Hypocriſy: And whoſe Zeal to pull out the *Mote in their Brother's Eye*, proceeds from being inſenſible of the *Beam*, *which is in their own.* Hereby is likewiſe intimated, that Men, who themſelves are grievous Sinners, are by no means proper Perſons to reprove, and put to ſhame, thoſe, who at worſt are but their own Reſemblance: And, that the true Way to amend Mankind, is for each Man to

to look at Home, and begin with mending one. How much better were it to employ ourſelves, in publiſhing the Praiſes of God, and vindicating the Innocence of our abuſed Brethren; in ſetting every Action in its moſt advantageous Light, and pouring Balm into the many bleeding Reputations, which have been wounded deep, by artificial Malice, and Words, which, though *ſmoother than Oil*, are yet in effect *very Swords?* So ſhould we promote Peace and Goodneſs and Charity in this World. So ſhould we likewiſe enſure to ourſelves Favour at that great and terrible Day, when *by our Words we ſhall be juſtified, and by our Words we ſhall be condemned.* That Day, in which even the Secrets of all Hearts ſhall be brought into Judgment; every hard uncharitable Thought placed to Account; and in which therefore it is of the laſt Concern, moſt earneſtly to endeavour, and to pray, that our *Good Lord* may *deliver us.*

Pſal. lv. 22.

Matt. xii. 37.

The Fifth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

GRant, O Lord, we beſeech thee, that the Courſe of this World may be ſo peaceably ordered by thy Governance, that thy Church may joyfully ſerve thee in all godly Quietneſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

1 *St.* Pet. iii. 8.

8. *BE ye all of one Mind, having Compaſſion one of another, love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

PARAPHRASE.

8. Let Concord in Judgment and Affection, tender Concern for each others Sufferings, brotherly Kindneſs, Relenting and Fellow-feeling, expreſſed by all proper Acts of Mercy, and by engaging Behaviour towards each other, be viſible among all Chriſtians.

9. And let not the Cruelty of your Enemies, provoke you to return the like Injuries either in Deed, or in Word; but consider the Precepts and Design of your Religion, both tending to this, that Men should forgive, as they are forgiven.

9. *Not rendering Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing: but contrariwise, Blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a Blessing.*

10, 11, 12, 13. Besides, such Meekness is the best Expedient to secure your Peace and Quiet with Men, as well as Protection and Favour with God.

10. *For he that will love Life, and see good Days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips that they speak no Guile.*

11. *Let him eschew Evil, and do Good: let him seek Peace and ensue it.*

12. *For the Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers: but the Face of the Lord is against them that do Evil.*

13. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is Good?*

14, 15. Who, if he should permit you to be persecuted, yet, when 'tis for a good Cause, even this is for your Advantage. And therefore let not any Fears of this Kind shake your Resolution, but continue, by doing your Duty, to bring Glory to God and his Truth.

14. *But and if ye suffer for Righteousness Sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their Terror, neither be troubled;*

15. *But sanctify the Lord God in your Hearts.*

COMMENT.

THE greatest Part of the Duties, to which this Portion of Scripture exhorts, have fallen under some Consideration, upon other Occasions before. The Apostle had, in the Close of the *Second*, and Beginning of this Chapter, inculcated such, as Christians are obliged to, by Virtue of some particular Relations and Capacities, wherein the Providence of God hath placed them. After which, he proceeds here to some of a more general Nature, whose

Ver. 8.

whoſe Obligation is of Extent, equal with this Religion itſelf; and ſuch, as all who profeſs it have a Concern in. But, though no Perſon be exempted from, no Time improper for, the Exerciſe of them; yet are they more eſpecially ſeaſonable in Perſecution and Affliction. Unanimity in Principles, mutual Forbearances, tender Affection, Fellow-feeling of Hardſhips, that bear cloſe upon our Brethren, and all the Comforts and Encouragements of a kind and condeſcending Deportment; as they are Indications of a Temper moſt truly reſembling the Meek and Holy *Jeſus*: So are they the beſt Defence againſt a common Enemy; and of mighty Efficacy, to ſoften, and keep up the Hearts of each other, under the Calamities, which a whole Sett of Men ſhall be expoſed to, by being all embarked in the ſame good Cauſe. Aſſiſtances, which nothing can ſo well prove the Power of, as Experience. And ſuch, as they, who want the Wiſdom mutually to contribute to each other, do manifeſtly take the Adverſary's Part, and betray their own Safety, or loſe their Conſolation. They break that Force, which united, might make Head againſt their Danger; and add to that Burden, whoſe Weight would be abated, if each were ready to bear a Part in it, by eſteeming the Sufferings of others his own, and acting in Concert againſt them accordingly.

But even, when thus joined, and diſpoſed to all the Charitable Offices, which Ver. 9. the ſame Profeſſion, and the ſame Diſtreſs, ought to produce in Perſons, ſo nearly and ſo many Ways allied; they are not at Liberty to enter into all Sorts of Meaſures. They are preſumed to ſuffer wrongfully, and to be blacken'd with Malicious Calumnies; which are deſigned to give Countenance to the Injuries they ſuſtain, by repreſenting them, as Perſons that deſerve to ſuffer. But Wrong muſt not be repaid with Wrong, nor Falſhood with Falſhood, no nor yet true Reproaches

with the like. This were to contradict the End and Temper of their Religion; nay, it were to go counter to Intereſt, no leſs than Duty. For, however Fleſh and Blood and irritated Paſſions may perſuade the contrary; ill Uſage is more eaſily prevented, more likely to be eſcaped from, or, if neither of theſe ſhould happen, yet more eligible to be endured, with Meekneſs and Innocence; than by giving Way to thoſe hot and angry Reſentments, which the falſe Wiſdom of the World is wont to have Recourſe to, for Remedies againſt them.

Ver. 9. 1. Theſe contradict the Temper and End of the Chriſtian Religion, which propounds the Inheritance of a Bleſſing as its Reward. A Bleſſing, freely beſtowed upon Enemies and Offenders; and ſo provoking us to an Imitation of that Mercy and Forgiveneſs in God, upon the Exerciſe of which the Whole of our own Happineſs depends. A Bleſſing, never to be obtained by any, who will not ſubmit to this Condition. A Bleſſing, merited by the Sufferings of a Saviour in our Stead and Behalf, who hath in this Particular left us a Pattern, of not reviling again when reviled, nor threatning when we ſuffer.

See Goſpel for 5 Sund. in Lent.

2. This contradicts our Intereſts too. It gives up that Gentleneſs and Goodneſs, which will not fail to melt the Hearts, that have any Remains of Humanity, and muſt diſarm that Rage, which Returns of Fierceneſs would exaſperate. It robs us of our beſt Defence, the peculiar Favour and Protection of God; and takes the Cauſe out of his Hand, when we attempt our own Deliverance by Methods diſpleaſing to him. (Concerning both which Arguments I beg my Reader's Leave, to refer him back to my Comment on the Epiſtle for the *Third* Sunday after *Epiphany*.) And it obſtructs the Supports of a good Conſcience, the inward Conſolations

Ver. 10, 11.

Ver. 12.

ſolations of the Bleſſed Spirit, and the cheering Proſpect of a Recompence hereafter, which belong to them only, *who ſuffer for Righteouſneſs Sake.* *See* Ch. iv. 13, 14. Ver. 14.

That then, which Chriſtians, when perſecuted and injured, have to do, is, not to let any of thoſe Deſpondencies overwhelm their Spirits, which their Oppreſſors are labouring to drive them to; and which they, who have none but human Helps to depend upon, find it impoſſible to bear up againſt. They muſt *ſanctify the Lord God in their Hearts:* That is, teſtify their Belief of his glorious Attributes to all the World. And this is done, when they depend upon his Power to extricate them out of (otherwiſe invincible) Difficulties, and ſo flee to, and reſt upon him, as a ſure Sanctuary. When they refer to his Wiſdom and Juſtice the Seaſon, and the Methods of executing Vengeance upon thoſe wicked Men, who *ſmite down his People*, and *trouble his Faithful* Ones: When, notwithſtanding any Delays in the Accompliſhment, they buoy up their ſinking Spirits with the Certainty of his Promiſes: And laſtly, be the Event of Things at preſent what it will, when they ſtedfaſtly adhere to their Duty, at the Expence of all the World counts dear, and will not be prevailed upon for any Terms to incur his Diſpleaſure. Men of this Diſpoſition do him true Honour; and as they may reaſonably hope that *his Eyes will be* always *over them*, and *his Ears open to their Prayers:* So are they in the true Frame of Mind, for offering up the Prayer of this Day in particular, Even that *the Courſe of this World may be ſo peaceably ordered by his Governance, that his Church may joyfully ſerve him in all godly Quietneſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Ver. 14. Pſal. xxxiv. 15.

The FIFTH SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

1. Compare this with St. *Matth.* iv. 18—22.

2. * Two Veſſels, the one belonging to *Andrew* and *Peter*, the other to *Zebedee*, and his two Sons, *James* and *John*.

6. * *Andrew* and *Peter*.

7. † *Zebedee* (who was likewiſe preſent: See *Matt.* iv. 21.) and his two Sons.

St. Luke v. 1.

1. *AND it came to paſs, that as the People preſſed upon him to hear the Word of God, he ſtood by the Lake of Genneſareth.*

2. *And he ſaw two * Ships ſtanding by the Lake: but the Fiſhermen were gone out of them, and were waſhing their Nets.*

3. *And he entered into one of the Ships, which was Simon's, and he prayed him that he would thruſt out a little from the Land, and he ſat down and taught the People out of the Ship.*

4. *Now when he had left ſpeaking, he ſaid unto Simon, Launch out into the Deep, and let down your Nets for a Draught.*

5. *And Simon anſwering ſaid unto him, Maſter, we have toiled all the Night, and have taken nothing: Nevertheleſs at thy Word I will let down the Net.*

6. *And when * they had done this, they incloſed a great Multitude of Fiſhes, and their Net brake.*

7. *And they beckoned unto their † Partners, which were in the other Ship, that they ſhould come and help them. And they came, and filled both the Ships, ſo that they began to ſink.*

8. *When Simon Peter ſaw it, he fell down at Jeſus' Knees, ſaying, Depart from me, for I am a ſinful Man, O Lord.*

9. *For he was aſtoniſhed, and all that were with him, at the Draught of Fiſhes which they had taken:*

10. *And*

10. *And ſo was alſo James and John the Sons of Zebedee, which were Partners with Simon. And Jeſus ſaid unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men.*

10. What St. *Luke* relates here as ſpoken to *Simon*, St. *Matthew* is expreſs, was equally ſpoken to *Andrew*. And the next Verſe makes it highly probable, that *James* and *John* had their Part and Concern in it alſo.

11. *And when they had brought their Ships to Land, they forſook all and followed him.*

COMMENT.

THE Goſpel for this Day (as will more fully appear by and by) relates the Manner of calling four great Apoſtles, who were main Pillars of the Chriſtian Church. For the better underſtanding whereof, I ſhall firſt compare this with ſome other Scriptures, wherein they are concerned, and then make ſome Remarks proper to the Occaſion.

Now *Firſt*, there cannot, I think, be any Doubt, whether the Coming of two of theſe Diſciples to Chriſt, mentioned in the Beginning of St. *John*'s Goſpel, were not altogether diſtinct from this related here. There two of *John*'s Diſciples are moved to follow *Jeſus*, by their Maſter declaring him to be the *Lamb of God*. Here *Jeſus* makes the firſt Approach, and takes them off from the Buſineſs of their Trade, when their Thoughts and Labours were employed another Way. There *Andrew* finds his Brother *Simon*, and conducts him to Chriſt. Here Jeſus finds both together, and calls both to himſelf. The Baptiſt there is ſaid expreſsly to have Diſciples retaining to him, and after that to have baptized publickly: But at this Time *John* was caſt into Priſon, and from thence *Jeſus* took the Occaſion of retreating into *Galilee*. 'Twas here he entered into his prophetic Office, preached in his own City *Nazareth*, and

Ch. i. 37—43.

John iii. 23, 24, &c. Matth. iv. 12. Mark i. 14. Luke iii. 19, 20. Matth. iv. Mark i. Luke iv. John ii. iv.

exerted

exerted his Divine Power in ſundry Inſtances before this miraculous Draught of Fiſhes. Hence it is plain, theſe Apoſtles had two different Calls, directed to two different Purpoſes; and conſequently, the *Followings* of *Jeſus* in Obedience to them were of different Sorts. The Firſt only brought them to the perſonal Knowledge of Chriſt; the Second, to a perſonal Attendance upon him. After the Firſt, they returned to the Buſineſs of their Trade, and lived by their own Labour: After the Second, they deſiſted from ſecular Buſineſs, became a Part of their Maſter's Family and Retinue, converſed conſtantly with him, and were ſuſtained by him.

2. Let us, in the *next* Place, compare the Deſcription of this Call by St. *Luke*, with that other more conciſe one, by St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*. They tell us, theſe Fiſhermen *were caſting a Net into the Sea*; this Evangeliſt, that they were *gone out of their Ships*, and *were waſhing* (or, as it might more properly be rendered, *had waſhed*) *their Nets*. They ſay, that *Jeſus*, upon calling *Peter* and *Andrew*, departed thence, and finding *James* and *John* with *Zebedee* their Father, called them alſo: But here all four are ſaid to have been together, all to have aſſiſted in drawing up the vaſt Quantity of Fiſhes; and all, as was hinted before, are intimated to have a Concern in thoſe Words at the 10th Verſe, though more particularly directed to *Simon*.

Matth. iv. 18.
Mark i. 16.
Ver. 2.
Matth. iv. 21.
Mark i. 19, 20.

Now, for reconciling any ſeeming Differences between Paſſages of this Nature, ſome Allowances are reaſonable and neceſſary to be made, for Variation of Circumſtances, in one Hiſtorian, who makes it his Buſineſs to recount Matters diſtinctly and at large; and in another whoſe Intention it is, only to declare Facts in general, without entering into the Series and Order of each Action. This is the Caſe of the two other Evangeliſts. They deſigned us no more, than a ſummary Account of theſe four Apoſtles Call, and their

their Compliance with it. Hence they contented themſelves with ſetting down apart, ſo much firſt as relates to *Andrew* and *Peter*, and afterwards what related to *James* and *John*. But now St. *Luke*, who purpoſes to ſhew the Manner and whole Proceſs of this Call, records the Miracle at length; he interweaves ſeveral remarkable Paſſages, wherein the Four were jointly concerned, and by which they at once received ſuch aſtoniſhing and convincing Evidences of Chriſt's Power, as diſpoſed them to that eminent Readineſs and Zeal, of devoting themſelves to his Service ever after.

Thus then the Order of the Whole ſeems to lie: Our Saviour had, for Privacy, retired to the Side of the Sea, or Lake of *Genneſareth*. It ſo fell out, that ſome Fiſhermen juſt at that Time had been long toiling without any Succeſs: They had therefore now left off, had waſhed their Nets, and ſome of the Company had not only waſhed, but were mending them. In order whereunto they had quitted their Boats, but were now returned to them again. All theſe Circumſtances, though not needful to be mentioned in the brief Account of St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, did yet contribute greatly to St. *Luke*'s Purpoſe, of undertaking to deſcribe the miraculous Draught, which was taken at our Lord's Command to make a freſh Experiment. He therefore fitly brings all theſe Circumſtances together; becauſe ſuch, as argued the Parties concerned to have deſiſted from any farther Attempts, and to ſit down in deſpair of any Game, at that Time. Conſequently, the prodigious Succeſs they found ſo quickly after, was the more amazing, and the more lively repreſented, by the many fruitleſs Trials, and utter Diſtruſts of any ſuch Thing, which thus appear to have gone before.

While our Lord was walking upon the Strand, and obſerving theſe Fiſhers, the Multitudes purſued him: And for Curioſity, or more properly for Edification, deſired to hear the Word of God at his Mouth. He, who

who was always willing to gratify any Inclinations to Piety and Improvement in Heavenly Wiſdom, contrived to inſtruct them, in a Manner the moſt commodious, that the Condition of the Place would allow. Hence he entered into *Simon*'s Ship, which was now at full Leiſure to receive him: And ſo placed the Multitudes before him, as at once to deliver himſelf from the Crowd, and to gain an Advantage, by that ſmall Eminence, of being better heard. Thus far, and in this Method, the Three Evangeliſts are brought to a good Agreement, and ſo leave us no ſufficient Ground of doubting, whether the Action be not one and the ſame, though not deſcribed by all with the ſame Exactneſs and Particularity. For here St. *Luke* ſets forward, with the Miracle omitted by them, the Importance whereof will be more clearly manifeſted, by thoſe Remarks, which I propoſed, in the

Ver. 4.

II. *Second* place, to make upon this Occaſion.

1. And the *Firſt* Thing I chooſe to obſerve, is the ready Obedience of St. *Peter*. When *Jeſus* bade him *launch out into the Deep, and let down the Nets for a Draught:* His Anſwer immediately is, *Maſter, we have toiled all the Night, and have taken nothing; nevertheleſs at thy Word I will let down the Net.* How vigorous were the Impreſſions of thoſe Divine Diſcourſes, which produced a cheerful Compliance, not diſcouraged by the Wearineſs of a whole Night's Labour in vain? The Nets were waſhed, and reſerved for a more favourable Seaſon; and yet the whole Trouble is willingly renewed at our Lord's inſtance. A ſeaſonable Warning for every Servant of his not to deſpond upon any unſucceſsful Trials in his Maſter's Buſineſs: Nor to ſink his Spirits for any Diſappointments in the Way of his ordinary Calling: When we ſee ſuch an Example now before us, of ſuch a Bleſſing upon a Mind ready to labour at his Word, and ſo large Amends made at once, for ſo many fruitleſs Experiments before.

Ver. 5.

2. For

2. For that is my *Second* Obſervation, The Wonderful Succeſs of this Obedience; *when they had thus done, they incloſed a great Multitude of Fiſhes.* So great, that *their Net brake*, and they found themſelves obliged to call in the Aſſiſtance of their Partners from another Ship; and both the Veſſels were ſo deeply laden, *that they began to ſink.* A Draught, which nothing at that Time could give them reaſon to expect; which nothing could have cauſed, but the commanding Power of Him, who hath all Creatures at his own Diſpoſal, and calls them together at ſuch Seaſons and Places, as he ſees fit. A Draught, which nothing could merit, nothing could better reſemble, than the marvellous Zeal and Faith of theſe Fiſhers, their worthy and reverent Apprehenſions of Chriſt, and the ſtrong Perſuaſion they entertained, that notwithſtanding any former Diſappointments, not any Thing, which they had his expreſs Order to do, though in itſelf moſt unlikely to proſper, ſhould ever be attempted without attaining its deſigned Effect. A moſt ſignificant Emblem this, of the indefatigable Induſtry, and moſt amazing Succeſſes of theſe Apoſtles afterwards, when they became *Fiſhers of Men.* Ver. 6, 7.

3. A *Third* Obſervation that offers itſelf, is the modeſt and becoming Expreſſion of humble Wonder, by *Peter's falling down at Jeſus his Knees*, and crying out, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful Man, O Lord.* This Adoration and Form of Speech conſpire to denote the profoundeſt Reverence imaginable: An awful Acknowledgment of a Divine Perſon and Power; a Mixture of Humility, and Surprize, and Dread, looking up firſt to the Almighty Author of it, and then reflecting back upon himſelf, as altogether unworthy ſo ſenſible a Demonſtration of the Divine Favour. All which Behaviour ſeems to have proceeded from a Notion, ſo often inculcated by *Moſes*, that *no Fleſh can ſee God and live.* This taught Men to believe his Preſence too Bright and Strong, for human Nature to ſuſtain: And from thence led them Ver. 8.

them to conclude, that all his extraordinary Approaches and Appearances toward them, might be ominous and full of Danger. And is not this a very natural Inference, when Men remember, how much they have to provoke the Anger of God, and how little, how impoſſible indeed it is that they ſhould have any Thing at all, to engage his Kindneſs, or invite him to the Condeſcenſion of a friendly Correſpondence with them?

4. Another Remark, proper for this Occaſion, is the End and Event of all that went before. For the Method, taken by our Lord to compoſe St. *Peter*'s Aſtoniſhment, we have in theſe Words:

Ver. 10. *Fear not, from henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men.* Thus he is given plainly to underſtand, whither this Miracle led, and what it portended. That it was the Figure of a richer and more plentiful Prey; that he ſhould be taken from that mean Employment, and exalted to one of higher and more honourable Importance: That his Net ſhould incloſe the Minds of reaſonable Creatures, and bring them into Captivity to the Goſpel; that theſe ſhould be caught, not as the other ſilly Animals, to their Deſtruction; but *taken* alive, nay therefore taken, that they may live. O bleſſed Capture, which is the only Inſtrument, the indiſpenſable Condition, of our Happineſs! To eſcape this Spiritual Net, is only to be *free from Righteouſneſs*; a falſe imaginary Freedom, worſe than the worſt of Slavery: 'Tis to continue Servants of Sin, in Bondage to Luſt and Corruption; a Service, which entitles to no other *Wages* but *Death*, Vengeance and Wrath without Mercy, Horrors and Torments of Body and Soul, irreverſible, unconceivable, everlaſting.

ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν.

Rom. vi. 20.

Ibid. Ver. 23.

There is indeed one of the moſt material Remarks, proper to this Matter, yet behind. The Compliance, I mean, paid to our Lord's Command, of following and forſaking all they had for

Ver. 11.

for him. But, in regard our Church hath not only fixed upon that, as the particular Commendation of one of these Apostles; but hath taught us to pray, that we may imitate the Pattern set us here: I purposely reserve, for the Day dedicated to his Memory, to consider, both wherein the Virtue of this Obedience consisted, and how far we, and Christians in general, are concerned to follow Examples of this Nature. *See St.* Andrew's *Day.*

The Sixth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O GOD, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good Things, as pass Man's Understanding, pour into our Hearts such love towards thee, that we loving thee above all Things, may obtain thy Promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* 1 *Cor.* ii. 9.

The EPISTLE.

Rom. vi. 3.

PARAPHRASE.

3. *KNOW ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his Death?*

3. Ye cannot sure but be sensible, that the Sacrament of Baptism obliges us to the Belief of Christ's Death.

4. *Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into Death: That like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life.*

4. Nay, not only the Belief of it, but a Conformity to it: Intimated by that significant Ceremony of covering the Party with Water, as his dead Body was covered with Earth. The Effect whereof will be rising again to a new Life, as he rose from Death and the Grave.

5. *For if we have been planted together in the Likeness of his Death: We shall be also in the Likeness of his Resurrection:*

5. For if we be united to him in the Resemblance of the Former, we shall likewise be resembled to him in the Benefits of the Latter.

6. In the Former, by living no longer a Life of Sin, which he died on purpose to take away the Guilt and Dominion of.

6. *Knowing this, that our Old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin.*

7. All Obligations of Servitude naturally determining with our Lives natural.

7. *For he that is dead, is freed from Sin.*

8. And accordingly, from the Inſtance of this figurative Death, we muſt live in a new Manner, and ſuch as may entitle, and reſemble, us to the Life Chriſt now leads.

8. *Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him;*

9, 10, 11. Which is ſubject to no ſecond Death; and therefore we muſt not return to our former Courſe, which, in the Spiritual Senſe, would be to die a ſecond Time, and ſo to be unlike him, who died once for all.

9. *Knowing that Chriſt, being raiſed from the Dead, dieth no more: Death hath no more Dominion over him.*

10. *For in that he died, he died unto Sin once: But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

11. *Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto Sin; but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

COMMENT.

THE Apoſtle had been magnifying the Freedom of God's Grace, in the Redemption of Sinners by the Death of Chriſt; and ſhewing, that the Works and Deſerts of Men had no Part in procuring this mighty Benefit; but that it ought to be thankfully and entirely aſcribed to the Divine Compaſſion and Love. From hence, he was aware, ſome might be perverſe enough to draw this wicked Inference; that then the worſe Men are, the more they contribute to the illuſtrating God's Mercy; and ſo the Freedom of this Grace takes off the Neceſſity of a Holy Life. This Inference he firſt rejects with Indignation and Abhorrence; and then proceeds here to prove it moſt unreaſonable in itſelf, and altogether inconſiſtent with the Profeſſion and Deſign of

Ver. 1.

of the Chriſtian Religion. The firſt Argument made uſe of to this Purpoſe, is taken from the Sacrament of Baptiſm; wherein we ſolemnly take that Profeſſion upon ourſelves. This makes the Subject of the Epiſtle now in Hand; and the Force of St. *Paul*'s Reaſoning upon it may be diſcerned, by conſidering the Particulars that follow.

1. It is plain from this, and ſeveral other Places of Scripture, that Baptiſm implies, and requires, an expreſs Belief of the Death of Chriſt, as the Inſtrument of our Salvation. Conſequently, there muſt be a firm Hope and Truſt of obtaining that Salvation, by his Sufferings, as the Efficient and Meritorious Cauſe, but by Faith and a Converſation agreeable to it, as a Conditional Cauſe, without which the Other will ſtand us in no ſtead. So that a right Belief, and a good Life, are our Part of the Covenant. For this, like all other Covenants, is mutual; and releaſes the other Party contracting, if that, which we indent for, be not ſo diſcharged, as God under the Goſpel hath been pleaſed to require.

2. The Apoſtle urges, that this is what Chriſtians cannot but be ſenſible of. Becauſe, not only the Terms upon which they are admitted into Membership with the Church, and all the preſent and future Privileges conſequent upon it, do expreſsly mention this Condition; but alſo the Rites of this Sacrament ſufficiently intimate it to them. The Ceremony of immerging the Body of the Baptized, repreſents the Burial of a dead Perſon under Ground. The pouring Water upon the Party, in Caſes where the Former cannot conveniently be done, anſwers to the covering and throwing Earth upon a Perſon ſo dead. But both agree in figuring a Death and Burial, as the emerging again doth a new Life. And this, it is plain, can only mean the Mortification of ſome old, and Quickening of ſome contrary Principle, in a Spiritual Senſe. All this, though it paſs upon the outward Man, yet manifeſtly

having no Effect, nor working any Change there, or in the natural Life; but only being contrived, by a ſenſible Repreſentation, and ſome proper Ceremonies ſeen by us, to confirm our Faith in Effects, which we neither do, nor can ſee. This is the Caſe of all the Sacraments, properly ſo called, that are, or ever have been, (and of ſome Kind there ever have been Sacraments) in all Ages of the World: That is, outward and viſible Signs of ſome inward and ſpiritual Grace, ſuſpended upon Conditions, ſuited to the State of Religion, at the Time of their reſpective Inſtitution and Obſervance.

3. Now, *Thirdly*, This I take to be obſervable in every Inſtitution of this Kind; that there hath conſtantly been ſome ſignificant Expreſſion, both of the Privilege, and the Duty, of the Parties entering into Covenant by it. It were no difficult Undertaking, I conceive, to make this out, as to the Ages of the Church antecedent to Chriſtianity. But I confine myſelf to St. *Paul*'s Inſtance before us. The Chriſtian's Privilege is a Releaſe from the Guilt and Dominion of Sin, and from the Death inflicted as a Puniſhment upon it. This Releaſe is procured by the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, conſidered not in his private and perſonal Capacity, but as the common Ranſom and Repreſentative of Mankind. This Death is repreſented; by the Baptized being put under Water; this Reſurrection, by his being taken out of the Water. The Former expreſſes our Belief in the Benefits of his dying; the Latter that of our riſing again after his Example; and, that we are no longer liable to endleſs Corruption. In this conſiſts our Privilege; we die as he died, but we are aſſured of Reſtoration to Life, as, and becauſe, he liveth again. But then the Deſign of his Death conſidered, as that, which was to prevent future, as well as to atone for paſt Sins, as plainly ſhews our Duty; becauſe this cannot be otherwiſe effected, than by Reformation of Life. There is indeed this

this Difference: That in the Point of Privilege, we are literally conformed to the Image of Chriſt, and as we actually die, ſo we ſhall actually ariſe from the Dead: Whereas in Point of Duty, we attain to a Metaphorical Reſemblance only. Our Body is not crucified and killed in Baptiſm, but the Body of Sin, our corrupt Appetites and Luſts; our Perſons do not revive, but our Graces and good Principles. From hence it is, that the Apoſtle does not ſay, we are planted together in his *Death* and *Reſurrection*; but (as St. *Chryſoſtom* and other Fathers obſerve very emphatically) interpoſes the *Likeneſs of his Death*, and the *Likeneſs of his Reſurrection*. Thus he intimates that there is only a Reſemblance of theſe Things at preſent; yet this is ſuch a Reſemblance, as is neceſſary to bring us to the Reality. In ſhort (as hath been formerly hinted) what our Saviour did and ſuffered for us muſt be, in a ſpiritual Senſe, and ſo far as we are capable, imitated, and acted over again by Us: And is not only an Object of our Faith, but a Rule for our Practice. *Epiſt. for* Eaſter-Eve.

Now there are ſome Paſſages in the Scripture under Conſideration, which, if diligently attended to, may be of uſe, toward diſcovering the true Extent of our Duty in this Particular. I will endeavour, as briefly as I can, to make ſome Profit of them to that Purpoſe.

1. Firſt then, let thoſe Expreſſions be obſerved, that *the Old Man is crucified with Chriſt*, that *the Body of Sin is to be deſtroyed*, and that *he that is dead, is freed from Sin.*

Theſe Phraſes, The *Old Man*, and the *Body of Sin*, are of a collective Signification; and import, that in the Covenant of Baptiſm, there is no manner of Reſerve allowed us: But that our Obligations are univerſal, and every Sort of corrupt Luſt, by the indulging whereof we are brought into Diſobedience, is equally renounced by them. The Reaſonableneſs of admitting no Exceptions in this Engagement, my Reader hath

Epiſt. for 5 *S. after* Trin.

already been acquainted with in a late Diſcourſe. That which we are as highly concerned to get a right Underſtanding of, is how this *Old Man is crucified*, and that *Body of Sin deſtroyed*, ſo as to deſerve the Character of being dead itſelf, or our being dead with regard to it; and that, after the Example of Chriſt, who, we know, was literally, and in the ſtricteſt Senſe dead.

Epiſt. for 1 *S. after* Eaſter.

Upon the like Occaſion I have formerly taken notice, that it is not human Nature, conſidered with the Appetites and Affections eſſential to it, but in regard of the Corruptions ſuperinduced by Sin, which we liſt ourſelves againſt, and are to treat as an Enemy. Baptiſm, when making us Chriſtians, leaves us ſtill Men; and conſequently neither does itſelf, nor can poſſibly engage us to, eradicate thoſe Paſſions and Deſires, which are interwoven with our original Conſtitution. Nor indeed is there any need it ſhould. For all our Fault and Miſchief proceeds, not from the Affections themſelves, but from the Miſapplication or Exceſs (in a Word, from the Abuſe) of them. Love and Hatred are the ſame Motions of the Soul, whether God and Heaven, or Sin and the World be the Object. But theſe, according to the Thing loved or hated, and according to the Meaſure in which it is ſo, promote our Virtue, or enſnare us in Vice. The Meaning then of *dying* to Sin is only, that, by our Care and good Habits, ſo entire a Maſtery ſhould be attained in the Government of our Affections, and the turning them to Holineſs ſhould become ſo eaſy and familiar and conſtant a Practice with us; that this Cuſtom ſhall be a Kind of new Nature; and thoſe Suggeſtions to Evil, which, even in the beſt Men, will now and then be ſtirring, ſhould have no more Power to ſeduce us, than a dead Carcaſe hath to move and act. For, properly ſpeaking, the Will is the vital Part of the Soul; and, as the Life or Death Natural appears by the Body exerting

exerting itſelf in, or being deprived of Motion: So is the Life or Death Spiritual to be judged, by the Determinations of the Will. And, be the Temptations from without, and the Inclinations from within, to do wickedly, never ſo importunate and ſtrong; yet if all theſe are not only dead, but buried; ſo conquered and ſo perfectly kept down, that they lie as it were under Ground, cannot get up again, cannot ſhake or move the Will to any Degree of Indulgence or Conſent; That Soul is truly *dead with Chriſt*, the *Old Man* in it *crucified*, and the *Body of Sin deſtroyed*. Which indeed is the only *Body* we are concerned to deſtroy. And hence the very Form of our baptiſmal Vow runs, that we *renounce* not the *World* at large, but the *vain Pomps and Glory, and covetous Deſires* of it; nor the *Fleſh* at large, whoſe Deſires to put off it is impoſſible, but the *carnal* and impure Luſts of it. And therefore, in our admirable Catechiſm, the Subſtance of that Vow is repeated, with this ſmall but ſignificant Variation; the *Pomps and Vanities of this* wicked *World, and all the* ſinful *Luſts of the Fleſh*. Thus intimating ſufficiently, that we engage no farther againſt theſe, than, as they are *wicked* and *ſinful:* Either ſuch themſelves, or the Means and Occaſions of betraying us into Habits, and Actions, and Diſpoſitions that are ſo. And thus much, I conceive, may ſuffice, for explaining that Death to Sin, whereby we are ſaid to be *dead* and *buried* with Chriſt in Baptiſm.

2. But, as the Benefits of his real Death are accompliſhed and aſſured to us by his real Reſurrection; ſo are thoſe of our figurative one, by our reſembling him in the Latter as well as the Former. And to this Purpoſe the Apoſtle mentions being *alive* with *him, planted together in the Likeneſs of his Reſurrection*, and, for an Explication of his Meaning, as he *was raiſed from the Dead by the Glory of the Father*, ſo our *Burial with him by Baptiſm into Death* is with this Deſign, that *like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the Dead by the*

Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in Newneſs of Life. The State we are left in by the former Particular, is a State of Inactivity, which ſuppoſes the corrupt Principle killed in us. But the State denoted by this, is one of Vigour and Action, and ſuppoſes us quickened by a quite contrary Principle. That would ſuffice to work in us the Image of a Saviour dead, and always to continue ſo; but without this we cannot attain another, as neceſſary, Part of his Likeneſs; the Image of a riſen and living Saviour. For the Character of a Chriſtian is by no Means anſwered, by the *mortifying all our evil and corrupt Affections*; but, as our Service expreſſes it, muſt be finiſhed, by *daily proceeding in all Virtue and Godlineſs of living.*

Baptiſm of Infants.

This is the Import of thoſe Figures, ſo very frequent in Scripture, of a *New* Heart, and a *New* Spirit; a *New* Man, and a *New* Creature; a *New* Birth, and a *New* Life. All which inſinuate the Greatneſs of the Change: The greateſt, indeed, that a Soul is capable of; and ſo great, as to render the Metaphors applied to it exceeding juſt and proper.

Now in regard the Soul of Man is a Principle or Subject of moral Good and Evil; the Newneſs here ſpoken of, it is evident, muſt be a Newneſs of Notions, Diſpoſitions, Deſires, and of a Converſation proceeding from, and agreeable to, theſe. Which when heavenly and virtuous, are deſervedly ſtyl'd New; becauſe corrective of, contrary to, and ſuperinduced after, thoſe vicious and worldly ones, wherewith, in this corrupt State of Nature, every Man is born. That Change is made by the Grace of God's Holy Spirit; which gives a freſh Turn to our Thoughts and Affections, imprints a true Senſe of Good and Evil, puts a quite different Bent upon the Will, diſpoſes it to walk by Faith rather than by Sight, to prefer pure and intellectual before ſenſual and polluted Pleaſures, to overbalance preſent and mean with eternal, though future

and

and inviſible Advantages: And ſo, by theſe and many other like Operations, renders us new, that is, quite other Men from what it found us, either actually being, or in a Diſpoſition to be.

And of this Change the Reſurrection of our Lord is very elegantly propoſed for a Pattern. His Body, when riſen, as hath been generally conceived, was ſo far ſpiritualiz'd, as no longer to be ſubject to any of our common Decays and Infirmities. And the eating and drinking we read of after this, were Inſtances of Condeſcenſion, to give inconteſtable Evidence of his being alive again; not any neceſſary Supports to a Nature then wanting them. In like Manner, when Chriſtians love Things that are holy, and ſpiritual, and heavenly, and get above the World and its Temptations; They act in Agreement to their Profeſſion. But, for the Cares, and Delights, and Advantages of Fleſh and Senſe, theſe indeed are Part of their Animal Life. Theſe ſhould always be looked upon as neceſſary Incumbrances, and inſeparable from a Condition of Mortality: but ſuch, as never can be worthy the chief of their Thought and Pains. Not to be wiſhed, farther than Nature and the Conveniences of doing good require them; and therefore the Time and Labour employed about them, is rather to be ſubmitted to, than choſen.

3. Once more. The Reſemblance of Chriſt, to which Baptiſm brings us, implies a conſtant Perſeverance in our Duty. Thus St. *Paul* argues too; *Chriſt being raiſed from the Dead dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto Sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* And then follows, *Likewiſe reckon ye yourſelves alſo to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* The Inference is ſtrong, and the Parallel cloſe. Our Lord could die but once, becauſe there could never be Occaſion

Ver. 9, 10, 11.

Occaſion to require it a ſecond Time. For the Deſign of his Death was to take away Sin: and becauſe this was accompliſh'd to the uttermoſt at once, therefore he died once for all. This argued the Perfection of his Sacrifice; this argues too the Life, to which he roſe, to be endleſs. Now, if Baptiſm repreſent his Reſurrection as well as his Death; it muſt be ſuch a *riſing to a Life of Righteouſneſs*, as never dies to Sin any more. Accordingly herein the ſpiritual and natural Life agree, that as we can be born but once, ſo we are baptized but once. And as the vital Principle in each Caſe is then imparted for a Man's whole Term, ſo is it in each Caſe left to the Man's own Care to preſerve and cheriſh it. There may indeed be many Languiſhings and Indiſpoſitions, there may alſo be violent and acute Diſeaſes in the Body, from which Recovery is had, and Health perfectly reſtored. There may too in the Soul be great Slacknings of Zeal, Waſtings and Failings, Falls by Infirmity or Surpriſe, nay grievous deliberate Offences, and corrupt Cuſtoms. And yet theſe, if taken in Time, may be cured by the Spiritual Food and Phyſic provided for that Purpoſe. Conſideration, and Prayer, and Repentance; the Word of God, and the Sacrament of his Death: Theſe are our Refreſhments and our Remedies. They ſuſtain us when we droop, they reſtore us when we are ſick, they enable us to grow, and ſtrengthen us when at our Stature. And therefore it is as much as the Life I am ſpeaking of is worth, for every Man to apply theſe frequently, ſeaſonably, and reverently. For, by neglecting theſe Ordinances, ill Habits get ground; and a Redundance of noxious Humours will choke our vital Principle, and throw us back again into that Death, from which there is no Birth or Reſurrection to reſcue us.

O that the Generality of Chriſtians would ſeriouſly lay this Scripture to Heart! That they would now and then

then reflect upon the Engagements, and the End, of Baptism! That they would carefully examine, what Conformity is to be found, between themselves and a dead and risen Saviour; and be convinced, that they have no Foundation for Hope in, nor Benefit from, that Death and Resurrection, farther than such Conformity can justify their Title! Men would not then content themselves with such a lame Obedience, as covers, and quite swallows up, a few faint Essays towards, or Acts of, Piety and Virtue, with frequent and grievous Relapses into Sin: As if the Lord, whom they are bound to imitate, had died often, and lain long buried, but rose and lived for very short Intervals. They would not think it sufficient to lead a Life of Ease and Idleness, of no Use, no Example; as if the doing Good were of no Consequence, but the abstaining from notorious Evil were the whole of their Engagement. Which indeed is in some Degree to copy after a Dead, but by no means after a Risen and Living, Saviour. Much less could any, who attend to this Passage, allow themselves in such Habits, as are a Scandal to Religion, and a virtual Abjuration of their Baptismal Covenant. Adultery and Lewdness, Gluttony and Drunkenness, Covetousness and Ambition, Strife and Revenge, Profaneness and Irreligion; these are such raging Plagues, as assault the very Seat of our Spiritual Life. The Persons guilty of them could not do a kinder Thing to the Credit of Christianity, than openly to renounce it. I had almost said, not a kinder Thing to themselves, since they only profess it to their heavier Condemnation; since they neither imitate their Lord, nor any Servant of his; except that traiterous one, who said, *Master, Master, and kissed him*, as a Signal to those Enemies, who came under His Conduct to take, and to mock, and to kill him.

The Sixth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matthew v. 20.

20. *JESUS said unto his Disciples, Except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

PARAPHRASE.

20. I tell you, that the Righteousness I require from my Disciples, is much more perfect, than that which the Jewish Masters teach, that Men are by Law obliged to.

21. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old Time, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill, shall be in Danger of the Judgment.*

21. They for the Purpose, hold the Sixth Commandment to be satisfied by abstaining from the Act of Murder.

22. *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his Brother without a Cause, shall be in Danger of the Judgment: and whosoever shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall be in Danger of the Council: but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in Danger of Hell-fire.*

22. But I tell you, that rash and causeless Anger, and all reproachful Language, proceeding from a Spirit of Rancour and Revenge, is a Violation of this Commandment.

23. *Therefore, if thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembereſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee;*

24. *Leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.*

23, 24. And this so great a one, and so offensive to God, that he will not accept the Prayers of an uncharitable Man. And the only Way for such a one to make Atonement for his own Sins, is to be reconciled to his Brother; to make Satisfaction for any Wrong done by him, and then to come and make his Application to God for that Forgiveness, which, 'till this be done, he is in no Condition of obtaining.

25. *Agree with thine Adversary quickly, whilſt thou art in the Way with him: leſt at any Time the Adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be caſt into Priſon.*

26. *Verily I say unto thee, Thou ſhalt by no Means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt Farthing.*

25, 26. When Men are sensible that an Adversary hath them at Advantage, they lose no Time in making up the Matter, that so the ill Consequences of letting Suits run to the Extremity may be prevented. Let this be your Practice with Almighty God, and make up the Quarrel with Him; by returning to Charity, before it be too late, and the Case past all Remedy.

COMMENT.

OUR Lord had a little before obviated all Imputations of Novelty, which might be caſt upon his Doctrines; by declaring it his Deſign, not to *deſtroy*, but to *fulfil*, or bring up the Moral *Law* to its juſt Height and Perfection. And here he proceeds to ſet down One out of many Inſtances, wherein the Chriſtian Religion hath exalted our Duty, above what the *Jewiſh* Doctors held Men accountable for. They condemn'd groſs Crimes, and palliated leſs; they were content with ſuch an Obedience, as the Letter of their Law directed. He requires all thoſe Qualifications and good Diſpoſitions, which ſecure and promote the true Intent of the Law. He cuts down Wickedneſs at the very Root; and prevents the Act, by ſuppreſſing the firſt irregular Motions, and every Tendency toward it. Of this we have here a remarkable Example, with Regard to Cauſeleſs Anger and Reviling Language: which I deſign for the Subject of this Diſcourſe. And, to the Intent it may have its due Effect, I will, *Firſt*, ſet before you the Sin of Anger, according to the ſeveral Degrees of it mentioned here. *Secondly*, I will repreſent the great Guilt of it. And, *Thirdly*, I will preſcribe ſome Remedies againſt it.

Ver. 21, 22.

1. The Fault, *Firſt*, is deſcribed in different Proportions: Each whereof riſes above, and is an Aggravation to, that which went before. The loweſt is expreſſed, by a Man's *being angry with his Brother without a Cauſe*. Concerning Anger in general, and how far it is allowable, a proper Occaſion for Enquiry will offer hereafter. Let it ſuffice at preſent to obſerve, that the Sin here condemned, may be committed at leaſt theſe *Three* following Ways:

Epiſt. for 19 *S. after* Trin.

1. *Firſt*,

1. *First*, All that Anger is evidently cauſeleſs, which Men ſuffer themſelves to fly out into, without any at all, or upon very ſlight, Provocations. And this is frequently too viſible in hot and haſty People, whoſe violent, unaccountable, abſurd Paſſion is really, at the ſame Time, matter both of Pity and Wonder. While for mere Trifles, for any thing, for nothing, for groundleſs Suſpicions, and jealous Whimſies of their own, they work themſelves up to all the Extravagancies of Rage and Madneſs. When they are incenſed againſt Brute Beaſts, at Creatures inanimate, at Croſſes purely accidental: In which there can be no Foundation for Anger, becauſe theſe Things do not act by Will or Choice; nor, even when they happen to be Inſtruments of Harm, are they in a Capacity of intending us any Injury. When we diſorder Ourſelves, becauſe Others do not agree with us in the ſame Opinions, or Speak, or Act, juſt as we would have them. When we are ruffled with the Reproofs of a Teacher, or fret at the Admonitions of a Friend; and reſent that as a Slight or a Wrong, which was intended for our Good; and done in Duty, or in Kindneſs to us. In a Word, when any of thoſe Things puts us out of Temper, which a Good Man would think deſerve his Thanks, or a Wiſe Man would overlook, as not worth his Notice. In all theſe, and ſundry like Inſtances, the Man, who feels himſelf provoked, is, in the ſtricteſt Senſe, *Angry without a Cauſe*.

2. And ſo is He too, *Secondly*, who, when a juſt Cauſe of Reſentment is given, exceeds in the Meaſure of it; and cheriſhes a Paſſion, deeper and fiercer than the Offence can juſtify. And this happens, as oft as Men are tranſported beyond the Bounds of Conſideration, to do or ſuffer that, which when they come to reflect upon in cold Blood, and to weigh Things in an equal Balance, they find Cauſe to check and condemn themſelves for. For Moderation and Equity are Vir-

tues

tues of perpetual Force, and ſome ſtanding Rules of Decency and Duty no Circumſtances can make it allowable to tranſgreſs. In ſuch Tranſgreſſions therefore, though the Whole of our Anger may not be without Cauſe, yet ſo much of it is as exceeds a reaſonable Proportion, and outweighs the Nature and the Merit of the Crime. How much comes under the Cenſure of being thus immoderate, is utterly impoſſible for Me, or any Man to determine in the general. This is one of the Points, in which every one muſt be his own Caſuiſt. But all that will certainly deſerve to be ſo cenſured, which the Judgment, when ſober, and free from Prepoſſeſſion and Heat, ſhall find to be more than was due or becoming. And we cannot doubt, but this will oftentimes prove a very great deal; when it is conſidered how falſe thoſe Glaſſes are, through which a Mind diſtempered with Paſſion ſees every Thing; how the leaſt Touch gauls us, when we are inflamed and ſore; and after how different a Manner we feel, and entertain, and judge of, the ſame Language, and the ſame Behaviour, when we come to be cool and quiet, and examine them over again, with the Principles of undiſturbed Reaſon, and the Meekneſs of the Chriſtian Religion.

3. Another Inſtance of the Crime before us, I conceive may be inſinuated by the Word *Brother*. The cheriſhing, I mean, malicious and revengeful Thoughts, againſt a Perſon, whom we are under the ſtricteſt Engagements to ſerve and love. Forgetting the Nearneſs of that Relation, which Nature and Religion have eſtabliſhed betwixt us: As, that we are the Workmanſhip of the ſame God, Children of the ſame Father, the ſame Fleſh and Blood, animated with the ſame rational and immortal Soul; And (which ought to be yet infinitely more endearing) that we are redeemed by the ſame Saviour, waſhed in the ſame Baptiſm, united by the ſame Faith, and ſo Members of the ſame myſtical Body,

and

and Heirs, through Hope, of the ſame everlaſting Kingdom.

Where theſe manifold Ties of intimate and tender Affection are remembered, they cannot but mightily diſpoſe to Gentleneſs and Forbearance. And every wiſe and good Man will be content to make large Allowances in Behalf of ſuch a Brother; and judge theſe Affinities worthy to be put into the Scales againſt many Miſcarriages. He will not take Diſguſt, where no Occaſion is given; and where a ſlight one happens, he will make no Difficulty to overlook it. He will put a Check even upon his juſteſt Reſentments, and ſtop within the Bounds of Equity and Decency. Eſpecially he will take ſo effectual Care to curb and quiet the Sallies of his Paſſion; that, whatever ſudden Ruffles may diſorder him, none ſhall be ſuffered to take root and fix into inveterate Hatred and Spight. For, he, who acts otherwiſe, exceeds in the Cauſe and the Degree of his Anger: And he, who acts otherwiſe, to a *Brother*, exceeds in regard of the Perſon, to whoſe Prejudice the Indignation is conceived. Thus much ſeems implied in the *firſt* Degree of the Fault forbidden here, that of being *angry with a Brother without a Cauſe*. So great Depravity, it ſeems, have our Paſſions of this Kind, even when ſuppreſſed and kept to ourſelves; even when Men think they have good Reaſon to commend their own Temper and their Conduct, for ſo far governing their Behaviour and their Tongues, that neither the One ſhall diſcover their Reſentment, nor the Other break out into abuſive Language.

The *Two* Degrees that follow, ſuppoſe this likely to be done. And, becauſe both *Raca* and *Fool* here are Terms of Virulence and Contempt, and differ only in the greater or leſs Degree of Anger expreſſed by them; I ſhall not think myſelf obliged to ſpeak to them diſtinctly; but will put them together, under the common

common Topic of Reproach, and vilifying Speeches to one another.

But here I muſt premiſe, that ſuch Terms of Diſdain are not univerſally unlawful. From the Mouth of a Superior they are often of Uſe, ſometimes of Neceſſity, to awaken ſtupid Men; to render them more effectually, at once ſenſible, and aſhamed of their Folly; to expoſe the horrible Abſurdity of pernicious Opinions, or the flagrant Enormity of wicked Practices. Thus *David* and *Solomon* call the perverſe Sinner *Fool*, Times without Number. Thus St. *James* declares him, who *reſts upon Faith without Works*, to be *Raca*, or a *vain Man*: Thus St. *Paul* aſks, who had bewitched his *Fooliſh Galatians*, and ſtyles *Elymas* the Sorcerer a *Child of the Devil, and Enemy of all Righteouſneſs*. Thus the Baptiſt allows the Phariſees and Sadducees no better Appellation, than a *Generation of Vipers*: And a Greater than all theſe, even the Pattern and Perfection of Gentleneſs and Meekneſs, ſtigmatizes the Scribes and Phariſees with the ſcandalous Titles of *Fools* and *Blind*, *Hypocrites*, and *Children* of *Hell*.

Jam. ii. 20. Gal. iii. 1. Acts xiii. 10. Matth. iii. 7. —xxiii. 15, 19.

Theſe Inſtances make it plain, that Terms of Diſparagement and Reproach are in ſome Caſes allowable: And particularly then, when (as St. *Paul* expreſſes it) Men are *rebuked ſharply* to render *them ſound in the Truth*: Where Charity, in a Word, is at the Bottom, and an High Authority in the Reprover gives ſuch Language Countenance. But ſuch Examples are not to be drawn into Precedents, without great Caution, and almoſt abſolute Neceſſity. Otherwiſe, when we deſign, not to promote the Party's or a Public Good, by thus rouſing or expoſing him, but purely to vent a Rage that boils over, and to do all the Miſchief ill Words are capable of, that is the Scurrility condemned in the Paſſage before us.

Tit. i. 12, 13.

It will not, I hope, be expected, that I ſhould enlarge in Explanations, or Inſtances, of theſe haughty and diſdainful Terms. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that they include all thoſe opprobrious Names, whereby Men ſignify their Contempt of one another. Such as we wiſh, the Brawls and Quarrels in our Streets, or even thoſe, where better Senſe and Breeding ought to exclude them, would permit us to continue in Ignorance of. Such at leaſt, as Decency exclude from hence. For indeed thoſe Contumelies and Revilings are only contrived, to ſpit the Venom of a furious undiſciplined Mind, out from a filthy and licentious Tongue, without any Regard to God, or our Neighbour, or Truth, or Good Manners. All theſe are comprehended under *Raca* and *Fool*. And, as each of them is the overflowing of the very Madneſs of Anger; ſo is it attended with ſo long a Train of Sins and Miſchiefs, as make it juſt with our Saviour, to charge them with great Guilt, and to threaten them with heavy Puniſhments. The Nature of *That*, and Reaſonableneſs of *Theſe*, I come to ſhew under my

II. Second Head. That cauſeleſs Anger, and abuſive Language, are highly offenſive to Almighty God, we need no better Proof, than the Declaration made here by Chriſt, that the Devotions of People, guilty in theſe Reſpects, can do them no Service; nor ſhall any the moſt ſolemn Sacrifice they can offer be accepted for their Sin. But, beſides this, we have almoſt infinite other Paſſages to the like Effect: Some that forbid all Envying, and Variance, and Malice, and Wrath, and *Clamour*, and *Bitterneſs*, and not only *Biting*, and *Devouring*, but even *Deſpiſing*, and *Speaking Evil of one another*. Some, that baniſh the Perſons addicted to theſe Exceſſes from common Society, and will not allow a Chriſtian with

Ver. 23, 24.

Eph. iv.

Jam. iv.

with a *Railer*, any more than with Infidels and moſt abandoned Profligates, no *not to eat*. Some that aſſure us, God himſelf ranks theſe Men with the blackeſt Offenders, and that as *Idolaters*, and *Fornicators*, and *Adulterers*, and *Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind*, and *Thieves*, and *Covetous*, and *Drunkards*, and *Extortioners* ſhall not, ſo neither ſhall *Revilers inherit the Kingdom of God*. And accordingly St. *John*'s Account of the heavenly *Jeruſalem ſhuts out of the Gates of it all Dogs, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a Lie*. By which ſeem to be meant all thoſe froward and quarrelſome, and (if I may ſo ſpeak) curriſh People, that bark and ſnarl at one another, and take a Pleaſure to foam out their own ill Nature and Rage, in Falſhood, and Bitterneſs, and foul-mouth'd Reproaches.

1 Cor. vi. Chap. vi. Rev. xxii. 15.

A heavy Doom this, but ſuch as we ſhall diſcern to be juſt too, if we attend a little to the following Particulars:

1. The great Contradiction between ſuch exceſſive Fierceneſs of Paſſion and Virulence of Speech, and the true Temper of the Chriſtian Religion. This, above all Things, labours to inſpire Peace and good Humour, Love and Tenderneſs, Meekneſs and mutual Reſpect. Virtues, that make Society uſeful, and Converſation ſweet and eaſy. But *Theſe* can never conſiſt with *Thoſe* fretful, and peeviſh, and fiery Diſpoſitions, which flame out into Paſſion upon every Trifle, and give their Tongues a Looſe upon every Character and Reputation that unhappily ſtands in their Way. Which puts me in Mind of obſerving

2. *Secondly*, That a great Aggravation of theſe Exceſſes in Paſſion is the manifeſt Injuſtice of them. For theſe do not meaſure the Actions, or the Qualities, of their Brethren, by the true Standard of Right and Wrong, of Good and Evil; but purely by Reſentment, and their Demeanour to ſome One Perſon

in particular. The Injury done, if any be done, is in ſuch Caſes eſteemed, not according to its Demerit abſtractedly conſidered, but by the Affront, or Inconvenience, that falls upon ourſelves. That which another ſuffers, we ſee without Indignation, nay we often excuſe or vindicate; but let it come Home to Us; and 'tis ſo barbarous, ſo heinous, and baſe; that we can never again think well of the Perſon that did it, be the Excellencies, that recommend him to the general Eſteem of the World, otherwiſe never ſo valuable and great. And yet the Thing is plainly the ſame, to whomſoever done, under the ſame Circumſtances. But hence it appears, that Pride and Partiality form all the angry Man's Judgments; that *Self* is at the Bottom of all this Indignation. And daily Experience proves the Crime in general to have little Concern in the Matter, by that very different Senſe and Notion Men have of it, when it does not happen to light upon their own Particular.

3. Theſe angry Reſentments are manifeſt Breaches of that Charity, which is the Subſtance and End of the whole Law. They are ſo, even when moſt private and ſuppreſt. For Charity does not regard the outward Carriage only, but muſt govern the inmoſt Affections of the Soul. And He, who thinks and wiſhes ill, is uncharitable and unchriſtian, as well as He, who ſpeaks and acts maliciouſly. And if the Man, who refrains his Mouth from opprobrious Language, have not preſerved his Virtue inviolate; much leſs do They preſerve it, who give their Paſſion vent, and allow themſelves any Manner of unbecoming Liberties, under the Heat and Diſorder of Provocation.

4. This ſhews the Reaſonableneſs of our Saviour's Argument here, which makes cauſeleſs Anger, and contemptuous Reproaches, a Branch of the Sin of Murder in particular. For ſo he does, by reducing it within

within the Compaſs of that Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not kill.* The Foundation of Miſchief, and Seeds of Violence, are laid in the firſt Emotions of the Soul. And there is little Ground to believe, that they, who indulge the Beginnings of Paſſion, will be diſpoſed, out of any true Principle, to prevent the fatal Conſequences of it. But, admitting them ſo diſpoſed, yet, when the Fire is kindled, every Thing helps to blow it up, and it may not afterwards be in our Power to get it under, although we would never ſo fain. *The Beginning of Strife* (as *Solomon* wiſely obſerves) *is as when one letteth out Water.* So long as the Banks and Dams are well fenced, and kept up to their due Height, this runs in the proper Channel; but when once thoſe give way, a Stream, otherwiſe ſmall, makes a huge Inundation, and bears down all before it, and knows no Bounds. Thus one Reſentment opens the Paſſage to a greater and fiercer, and one Word draws on another, till at laſt all end in Revenge and Blood. They therefore, who attend to the Conſtitution of Mankind, and how the ſenſual Part and Paſſions of the Soul puſh us upon all manner of Extravagance, cannot but ſee the Neceſſity of keeping a ſtrait Rein; and, that the only way to govern and reſtrain theſe, is to curb and prevent their Heat at firſt flying out: Becauſe then indeed is the Time of ſubduing and reſtraining them to the beſt Purpoſe. And they, who reflect upon Anger in particular, how this, above all other Paſſions, blinds the Reaſon, and carries the Man out of himſelf; what Furies and Devils it makes, where it hath got Poſſeſſion; what Heart-burnings and Contentions, what Tumult and Confuſion it creates; what Wounds, and Deaths, and Deſolations it ſcatters; muſt needs allow, that the Peace and Safety of the World could never be ſecured, but by cruſhing this venomous Cockatrice in the Egg. Religion there-

Prov. xvii. 14.

fore had not anſwered its End, nor been a competent Guard to Human Society; without leaving Men anſwerable for the very Tendencies and Occaſions, and for wilfully taking the firſt Steps toward ſuch pernicious Wickedneſs. For the Hands of Men could not be tyed up from Cruelty, without tying up their Tongues from Exaſperation and Bitterneſs. Nor could thoſe Tongues again be with-held from Evil-Speaking, without a Reſtraint from Evil-Thinking, laid upon that Part, out of whoſe Abundance it is that the Mouth does ſpeak. So neceſſary for the common Good it proves, to root up the Tree, and ſtop up the Fountain. For while that Tree is ſuffered to ſtand and live, it will produce corrupt Fruit; and ſo long as that Spring is left open, it will ſend forth poiſonous and bitter Streams.

I come now, in the *Laſt* Place, to propoſe ſome few Remedies, againſt the Sins we have been treating of; by which we may hope to reform any paſt, and to prevent any future, Guilt of this kind.

1. The *Firſt* of theſe is Humility, or a modeſt Opinion of our own Deſerts. For Pride, above all things, renders Men peeviſh and captious, jealous of being neglected, quickly provoked, and implacable when they are ſo. All which is the Effect of inſiſting upon greater Deference, than others, who do not ſee with the ſame partial Eyes, can diſcover to be their Due. This likewiſe diſpoſes ſuch, to return tho' but a ſuſpected Affront, with the utmoſt Inſolence and Contempt.

Prov. xxi. 24. *Proud and haughty Scorner is his Name, who dealeth in proud Wrath.* And you obſerve, that the vilifying Titles, condemn'd here by our Saviour, are Terms of Diminution; deſigned to import a wretched Diſtance in the Perſon ſpoken to, beneath the ſuppoſed Perfections and Dignity of the Party uttering them. And thus in Truth, in every Depreſſion of our Neighbour, there is a ſecret Purpoſe, not

not only to grieve Him, but to exalt our Selves. Were but this Swelling of the Mind once well diſperſed, we ſhould be leſs ſuſpicious: Converſation would be no Way uneaſy, and Caprice would utterly vaniſh. So ſays the Wiſe Man, *Only by Pride cometh Contention, but with the well adviſed is Wiſdom.* Prov. xiii. 10. The Conſiderate and the Religious are calm and cool; not haſtily inflamed, not at any Time outragious. Which ſhould they ſuffer themſelves in, their Character is forfeited, their Virtue borne down and loſt; for *where Envying and Strife* ſucceeds, there (according to St. *James*) is *Confuſion and every evil Work.* James iii. 16.

2. A Second Remedy againſt theſe Sins would be, frequently to reflect upon the horrible Deformity, and dreadful Conſequences, of them. How Anger turns Men into wild Beaſts, and quite diveſts them of Humanity and Common Senſe. What Agonies of Mind, what Diſorder of the Spirits, what deſpicable Abſurdities in Behaviour, what Fury and Phrenzy it hurries them into; what raſh Oaths, what horrible Imprecations, what blaſphemous, nay, what ſenſeleſs Profanations of God's moſt Holy Name; what Virulence of Expreſſion, what baſe divulging of Secrets, what Injuries, and Violations of intimate Confidences, which are ſure to be condemned ever after, but perhaps can never be repaired again. Theſe are Things, ſo notorious, and ſo incident to the Paſſion of Anger, that I verily believe, no Man ever ſaw another violently tranſported with it, but he either pitied or deſpiſed him; and, that none was ever ſo tranſported himſelf, who was not guilty of ſomething, which, upon ſecond Reflexion, and in cold Blood, he did not find Cauſe to repent and be very much aſhamed of. But the weighteſt Conſideration of all is that of the Vengeance theſe Sins expoſe us to. A Vengeance, which the Violent and Revengeful hope in vain to eſcape, who ſhew

themſelves ſo rigorous and bitter upon every ſlight Occaſion; and at the ſame Time ſtand in ſo great need of Forbearance and Clemency, as having in ſo many Things offended both God and Man.

3. Another excellent Preſervative would be, not to put ourſelves into a Paſſion for any Thing, till we have reaſon to be thoroughly perſuaded of the Truth, and have well conſidered the Conſequence of it.

It is one unfortunate Obſtruction to Peace and good Neighbourhood, that the things People are extremely grieved to hear, they are yet inquiſitive after, and forward to believe. This gives Whiſperers and Slanderers too eaſy Acceſs, and too miſchievous an Advantage; when they, under Pretence of mighty Friendſhip, officiouſly inform us, what others have, behind our Backs, done, or ſpoken, concerning us. Thus have a thouſand and ten thouſand Quarrels ſprung up, which never had any real Ground at all. Well were it therefore, if, upon ſuch Occaſions, we could be prevailed upon to ſuſpend our Reſentments, till fully ſatisfied, upon good Proof, that Matters have not been miſrepreſented to us. Admirable to this purpoſe is the Son of *Sirach*'s Advice. *Admoniſh a Friend, it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he doth it no more. Admoniſh thy Friend, it may be he hath not ſaid it; and if he have that he ſpeak it not again. Admoniſh a Friend, for many Times it is a Slander; and believe not every Tale.*

Eccluſ. xix. 13—15.

But if the Thing be true, yet it may not be worth our Reſentment; and therefore its Quality and Circumſtances ſhould alſo be carefully and candidly examined. And, could we once bring ourſelves to this Reſolution and Temper, the Buſineſs, I am labouring for, were done. All haſty and precipitate Paſſion would effectually be prevented: For in the time of that Conſideration, our Minds would find leiſure to cool, and we ſhould ſcarce ever be angry at all; but certainly never

never *without a Cauſe*, nor violent and bitter, *with one*. Thus would a World of Miſunderſtandings be laid aſleep, and of miſchievous Quarrels be ſtifled in the Birth. The greater, much greater Part whereof, I firmly perſuade myſelf, would, if thoroughly inquired into, be found at the Bottom to have been raiſed from Falſhoods, or from Trifles. Thus we ſhould not fail to deliver our own Souls, at leaſt, from infinite Follies and Inconveniences, from Abundance of Guilt here, and from our Lord's dreadful Sentence, in this Paſſage, of Condemnation to eternal Miſery hereafter.

4. The *Laſt* Remedy in this Caſe, which I ſhall need to mention, is frequent Communicating in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. A Feaſt of Commemoration for the greateſt Inſtance of Forgiveneſs, that ever was exhibited to Mankind; of the higheſt Provocations paſſed over, in the moſt condeſcending and even amazing Manner. The Remembrance whereof ought to be more than ſufficient to compoſe the moſt diſorderly, the moſt deſerved, Reſentments. And a Feaſt of Love too, expreſſing the moſt ſincere Friendſhip for, the moſt entire Union with, every Member of his Myſtical Body, whoſe Death for his Enemies is there repreſented. And how neceſſary, how indiſpenſable a Preparation for this Approach to God the reſtraining, ſubduing, and repenting of, any former Exceſſes of our Paſſions in this Kind is, we have all the Evidence in the World, from God's refuſing here to hold any friendly Correſpondence with, or to make any Account of the Prayers and moſt ſolemn Acts of Devotion, when offered up by Perſons defective in this one Particular. For this is the plain Connexion, this the natural Importance, of our Lord's Declaration, immediately ſubjoined to the Paſſage, I have all along been conſidering. A Declaration expreſſed indeed in Terms that allude to the *Jewiſh*, but of equal ſignificance and effect with regard to the Chriſtian Worſhip; (And I would to God all Chriſtians, that frequent the

the Holy Table, and entertain great Hopes from ſo doing, would ſeriouſly lay it to Heart.) *Therefore, if thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remember that thy Brother hath aught againſt thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and* (though thou haſt proceeded thus far, yet even then) *go thy Way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* I conclude this Diſcourſe, with a Remark upon the very careful Proviſion, which our eſtabliſhed Church hath made, for the punctual Obſervance of this Command. In the Warning given of this Sacrament to be adminiſtered, the Caution runs thus: "If any of you be in "Envy, or Malice, or in any other grievous Crime, "repent you of your Sins, or elſe come not to that "Holy Table; leſt after the taking of that Holy "Sacrament, the Devil enter into you, as he entered "into *Judas*, and fill you full of all Iniquity, and "bring you to Deſtruction both of Body and Soul." In her Exhortation at the Time of adminiſtering, among other Qualifications, requiſite to eſcape the Judgments of God upon unworthy Communicants, This is expreſsly mentioned, "Be in perfect Charity "with all Men, ſo ſhall ye be meet Partakers of theſe "Holy Myſteries." And once more, when inviting the Communicants to approach the bleſſed Table, ſhe does it in theſe Terms: "Ye that do truly and "earneſtly repent you of your Sins, and are in Love "and Charity with your Neighbours, *&c.* Draw near "with Faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your "Comfort," *&c.* Which two laſt Warnings, ſo repeated, even after the Offertory, and ſome Progreſs in the Service already made, ſeem to have a particular Regard to theſe Words of our bleſſed Saviour. And all together abundantly prove, that, if any uncharitable Perſon intrude upon this Ordinance, the Guilt and Danger conſequent upon it, is to be charged in no Degree upon the Church's Negligence, but entirely upon the Party's own Preſumption.

The Seventh SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

LORD of all Power and Might, who art the Author and Giver of all good Things; graft in our Hearts the Love of thy Name, increaſe in us true Religion, nouriſh us with all Goodneſs, and of thy great Mercy keep us in the ſame, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.* *James* i. 17.

The EPISTLE.

Rom. vi. 19.

19. *I Speak after the Manner of Men, becauſe of the Infirmity of your Fleſh; for as ye have yielded your Members Servants to Uncleanneſs, and to Iniquity unto Iniquity; even ſo now yield your Members Servants to Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs.*

PARAPHRASE.

19. I am now about to urge an Argument, to the Reaſonableneſs whereof your own Practice will teſtify. Ye know by Experience, that, before your Converſion, your whole Care was to gratify your ſinful Luſts; let it now, after Converſion, be as entirely employed in Virtue and Holineſs.

20. *For when ye were the Servants of Sin, ye were free from Righteouſneſs.*

20. And ſerve your new Maſter as diligently as your old One, without dividing your Affections to Sin now, in which Righteouſneſs had no Part then.

21. *What Fruit had ye then in thoſe Things whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the End of thoſe Things is Death.*

21. This is but equal, ſuppoſing the Advantage of both theſe Services equal.

22. *But now being made free from Sin, and become Servants unto God, ye have your Fruit unto Holineſs, and the End everlaſting Life.*

22. But it is far from being ſo: For there is only Shame and Death to be got by the One; whereas Holineſs here, and eternal Happineſs hereafter, are the Reward of the Other.

23. *For the Wages of Sin is Death: But the Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

23. In which there is again this Difference; that Death is declared to be the Wages deſerved by Sin; but that eternal Life, attainable by Holineſs, neither is, nor can be deſerved: For this is a Gift, beſtowed by God, for the Sake of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

COMMENT.

SAINT *Paul* is here continuing to urge the Chriſtian's Obligations to Holineſs of Life. In the Epiſtle for the laſt Lord's Day, he had argued from the true Importance of Baptiſm, and the Engagement brought upon ourſelves in that Sacrament. But in this he proceeds from another Topick, and accommodates himſelf more immediately to the Circumſtances of thoſe Converts to whom he wrote. He brings to Remembrance their former Condition, and their Behaviour under it; and thence, by Parity of Reaſon, infers the Equity of the ſame Care and Zeal, in ſatisfying the Duties of their preſent Profeſſion; with that, which had all along been expreſſed, to ſatisfy thoſe corrupt Appetites and Paſſions, under whoſe Influence they had lived heretofore.

The Force of this Part of the Argument lies in two Propoſitions, virtually included in it. The Firſt is, that a Condition of Servitude implies an intire Obedience to the Party one profeſſes to ſerve. The Second, that all Mankind are Servants, though not all to the ſame Maſter. Some to Sin, the World, and the Devil; others to Almighty God and to Virtue. The Former is a State of Nature, in which all are born under the Dominion of thoſe corrupt Luſts, that perpetually command and carry them into Evil: The Latter is a State of Grace, which quickens Men with a new and heavenly Principle, commands and diſpoſes them to Good, and tranſlates them into another Service, which in Truth is perfect Freedom.

In this Regard then the Apoſtle appeals to their own Practice and Experience; whether, in the Former of theſe Services, they did not yield Compliance to every Suggeſtion of depraved Nature, readily, and without reſerve. They employed every Faculty (he intimates) of their Mind, every Member of their Body; grudged

no

no Part of their Time and Pains, boggled at no Difficulties, thought nothing too much to do, or to endure for the gratifying thoſe ſenſual Inclinations, that Riot or Uncleanneſs, that Ambition or Covetouſneſs, that Pride or Vain-glory, that Envy or Revenge, which then exerciſed a Dominion over them, without any Controul. Theſe never iſſued any Order to do wickedly, which, to the very utmoſt of their Might, was not obſerved, as ſoon as given.

This was indeed to anſwer the Character of Servants. And from the Nature of that Character it is, that the Apoſtle forms his Argument in this Place. For though the Maſter was changed, yet the Condition of theſe *Romans* was ſo far ſtill the ſame, that they continued Servants; and, in that Quality, were obliged to the ſame entire Obedience. So that as formerly Sin had the whole of their Thought, and Time and Endeavour, God and Religion ought now to have them entire. To divide themſelves between this new choſen, and that old forſaken Maſter, as it by no Means could conſiſt with their Contract and their Duty: So was it to deal with their preſent, much worſe than they had done with their paſt Maſter. For he is not equally ſerved, when any Tergiverſation, any Interrupture, any Mixture of Sin, is permitted to break the conſtant Tenure of Obſervance, intended for at their Entrance into the Retinue and Family of God.

It is confeſſed, in the Former of theſe Services, Inclination and Nature would put them forward: Whereas the Latter goes againſt the Grain, and is diſcharged with Difficulty and Reluctance. But this Objection too is balanced, by thoſe Aſſiſtances for correcting the Corruptions of Nature, which are imparted ſo liberally, that none, who does his own Part faithfully, ſhall have Reaſon to complain for want of Acceptance and Succeſs. And, though in fact our Obedience againſt the Bent and Infirmities of Senſe be abaſed with ſome Allay;

Allay; yet ſtill our Diſpoſitions and Deſires may and ought to be true to their Point. And, provided they continue ſo, this is interpreted faithful and true ſerving of *Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs*; becauſe the lower Parts of the Soul, and the Members of the Body, are, upon theſe Terms, ſure to ſtand clear of all deliberate and wilful Tranſgreſſion.

Thus far then St. *Paul*'s Argument holds good, ſuppoſing both Services, and the Profits of both equal. But if the Advantages do manifeſtly preponderate on one Side; as no Man can be reaſonably blamed, who changes for the better; ſo every one will naturally be more diligent in his Buſineſs, where the Duty is more agreeable, and the Conſideration for it more valuable. And therefore from theſe Topics the Apoſtle ſtrengthens his Reaſoning: And to the Equity of the Relation they ſtood in, urged, as you have ſeen, in the *three* former Verſes of this Day's Epiſtle, he adds, in the *three* laſt, that moſt powerful Motive of Intereſt. For if a State of Service, alike in both Caſes required them to do as much: The Profits accruing from their latter Service, required as much more from them in Proportion, as the Advantages of being faithful and diligent are greater, than any poſſible to be attained in the Former.

Had this Expoſtulation gone no farther, than that Sentence, *What Fruit had you then in thoſe Things?* One might be apt to think, that nothing at all comes to Men from the Service of Sin; but that it leaves them, at giving over, juſt where they begun. And this ſure were Diſcouragement enough in all Conſcience, to labour for the Wind, and undergo a World of Drudgery, for a Maſter, who will never conſider us for our Pains.

Ver. 21.

But alas! This is far from being the true State of the Caſe. For the Words next following ſhew the Emphaſis of that Queſtion to lie, not in there being no Conſequences of ſuch a Service, but thoſe that are

a great

a great deal worſe than none. Would the Limits of this Diſcourſe allow, or did the Thread of the Apoſtle's Argument require it, nothing were eaſier than to prove, that the Toil and Drudgery of a Courſe of Vice is inſupportable; and, that Men would have unanſwerable Objections againſt Religion, ſhould it impoſe upon us Commands, in any Degree ſo ſlaviſh and tyrannical, as our own Luſts and Paſſions do. But St. *Paul* here is treating with Converts, that had broke their Chains, and aſſerted their native Liberty. And therefore he contents himſelf with the Mention of ſuch Conſequences, as that Service, even when forſaken, does naturally produce. Of theſe one preſent and inſeparable Effect is *Shame*; which, to a Mind of any Ingenuity, muſt needs be very grating and terrible. For, what can make a Man amends, for the continual Reproaches of his own Breaſt, and the Reflexions of having long perſiſted in Facts, which cannot be remembered without the utmoſt Confuſion? On the contrary, when we are happily got looſe from this Tyranny, and become our own Men; Reaſon never fails to juſtify, nor Conſcience to applaud, our better Choice. And theſe are Satisfactions ſo ſuited to human Nature, that all the Commendations, nay, all the Honours and Rewards, capable of being beſtowed by the whole World upon an ill Action, are not an Equivalent for the private Pleaſure and Peace, which reſult from a Teſtimony within, borne even to the moſt traduced, afflicted, and perſecuted Virtue.

Again. The *End of theſe Things is Death.* Death of the Body, even when renounced and repented of: But otherwiſe Death, that is, infinite and irreverſible Miſery, of Body and Soul both. And what a lamentable Conſideration is this, that, after unconceivable Labour and Pain, a Man hath not only purchaſed Reproach and Self-Condemnation, but enſured to himſelf Remorſe and Torment, without Interval or End? Whereas, by employing his Time in the gentle and agreeable

agreeable Service of God, he acts every Day more and more in Compliance with the Dictates of Reaſon, advances and improves human Nature, exults and triumphs with inward Peace and Joy, which carry him through his Work with Alacrity and Delight: But, when that Work is brought to a Concluſion, he is paid, and overpaid, for all the Difficulties in it, by a Bliſs, of which all his former Satisfactions were Foretaſtes and Pledges: A Bliſs therefore ſtyled *Life*, becauſe all that is dear and deſirable, is implied and included in it: And a Bliſs that is Life indeed, becauſe ſubject to no Decay from within, or to any Deſtruction from without.

There is yet one very remarkable Circumſtance behind, greatly to the Advantage of a holy Life. 'Tis that the *Death* inflicted upon Sin is the *Wages* of it: What God hath expreſsly threatened, and given Men ſufficient Warning of: And therefore what they, who know before-hand upon what Terms they enſlave themſelves, and who have ſo many Aſſiſtances and Opportunities put into their Hands, of being Free and Happy, do by their Obſtinacy deſerve. But the *Eternal Life*, awarded to good Men, is what the very Beſt of them neither do, nor ever can deſerve. For what can we deſerve of Reward hereafter, for embracing that Virtue, which ſo amply rewards its own Practice here? How can a Happineſs be ſtrictly merited, between the Eternity whereof, and the very ſhort Term we ſerve for it, there is no Manner of Proportion? What Claim can an Obedience lay, which is interrupted with Multitudes of Backſlidings and Neglects, each whereof would in Rigour evacuate its Title? We may indeed deſerve our Puniſhments, becauſe Sin is our own, entirely our own Act. But can we, with any good Senſe, be ſaid to deſerve a Recompence, and ſuch a Recompence, for Acts, not entirely, not originally ours; and that at his Hands too, whoſe free Grace and good Spirit it is, that works in

in us both the Will and the Deed? Moſt juſtly therefore doth the Apoſtle put the Difference here, between *Wages* and *Gift*: That is the Effect of Juſtice, this of Bounty. A Bounty not inclined by any Conſideration moving it on our Part; but redounding to, and deſcending upon us, by and for the Sake of a Perſon, who hath, it muſt be confeſſed, merited it to the uttermoſt. Even Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe Servants we are, who condeſcended to purchaſe it, at the Price of his own Blood: And therefore not unto us be the Praiſe, or any Part of it, but unto him, be Honour, and Glory, and Thanks, *for this his unſpeakable Gift.* 2 Cor. ix. 15.

The Seventh SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Mark viii. 1.

1. *IN thoſe Days the Multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jeſus called his Diſciples unto him, and ſaith unto them,*

2. *I have Compaſſion on the Multitude, becauſe they have now been with me three Days; and have nothing to eat:*

3. *And if I ſend them away faſting to their own Houſes, they will faint by the Way: For divers of them came from far.*

4. *And his Diſciples anſwered him, From whence can a Man ſatisfy theſe Men with Bread here in the Wilderneſs?*

5. *And he aſked them, How many Loaves have ye? And they ſaid, Seven.*

6. *And he commanded the People to ſit down on the Ground: And he took the ſeven Loaves and gave Thanks, and brake, and gave to his Diſciples to ſet before them: And they did ſet them before the People.*

7. *And they had a few ſmall Fiſhes: And he bleſſed; and commanded to ſet them alſo before them.*

PARAPHRASE.

Compare this Account with St. *Matth.* Chap. xv. 32, &c.

8. *So they did eat, and were filled: And they took up of the broken Meat that was left, ſeven Baſkets.*

9. *And they that had eaten were about four Thouſand; and he ſent them away.*

10. *And ſtraightway he entered into a Ship with his Diſciples, and came into the Parts of Dalmanutha.*

COMMENT.

THE Miracle recorded here, though differing in ſome few Circumſtances, yet being the ſame with regard to the Almighty Operation effecting it, and the Uſes proper to be made of it, as that in St. *John* vi. my Reader is referred to a Diſcourſe on that Subject, for the Fourth Sunday in *Lent*.

See Adricom. Manaſſ. §. 66.

I only add, that the Parts of *Dalmanutha*, *ver.* 10. anſwer to the Coaſts of *Magdala*, Matth. xv. 39. *Magdala* is ſaid to have been a Town ſo conſiderable, as to give Name to a Tract of the Country about it. Hence ſome have thought *Dalmanutha* a Village within that Diviſion. Others taking *Magdala* for the Town of that Name only, ſuppoſe our Lord to have come into that Part of the Coaſt between this and *Dalmanutha*; ſo that either of them might be named indifferently. Theſe Places lie near each other, in the half Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, beyond *Jordan*.

The Eighth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

Pſal. cxix. 91. *Prov.* xvi. 33.

O LORD, whoſe never-failing Providence ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth; we humbly beſeech thee, to put away from us all hurtful Things, and to give us thoſe Things which be profitable for us, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Rom. viii. 12.	PARAPHRASE.
12. *BRethren, we are Debtors not to the Fleſh, to live after the Fleſh.*	12. The Obligation that now lies upon us, is, not to live any longer by that carnal Principle, which prevailed under the Law; but by the Grace of God's Spirit, which is our Rule and Guide under the Goſpel.
13. *For if ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live.*	13. Becauſe the Former cannot free us from the Death inflicted as a Puniſhment of Sin: But the Latter ſecures to us the Reſurrection of our Bodies, and Immortal Happineſs.
14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*	14. The Reaſon is, that ſuch a Life gives Evidence of our being God's Children.
15. *For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*	15. And ſo no longer in a ſervile State, but adopted into the Family.
16. *The Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.*	16. All which is proved, by communicating the Spirit of God's natural, to us his adopted, Sons.
17. *And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God and joint Heirs with Chriſt: If ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that we may be alſo glorified together.*	17. But Adoption is in order to inheriting; and ſince this Inheritance cannot be attained in the preſent Life, it follows, that this Relation of Sonſhip neceſſarily infers a future Life. Wherein, even after Death, that Inheritance may be poſſeſſed. In the Glories of which future State we ſhall partake with Chriſt, if content in the preſent State to partake with him in Suffering.

COMMENT.

AFTER ſeveral other Pre-eminences of the Goſpel above the Jewiſh Law, and every other Diſpenſation antecedent to it; St. *Paul* does, in this Chapter, inſiſt upon that moſt valuable one, of ſecuring to them that obey it, Life and a happy Immortality. This he proves to be an Excellence, peculiar to the Goſpel, from the Means, whereby it is effected. The Firſt of theſe is Juſtification, or a Releaſe from the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin, whereby Death prevailed upon all Mankind, for as much as all had ſinned. This Benefit Chriſt obtained for us, by himſelf becoming our Sin-offering, the only true and expiatory Sacrifice; and ſo taking off the Condemnation due to us, by undergoing Death, on the Behalf of the whole human Nature, wherein he ſuffer'd. And to prove this an Advantage, peculiar to the Goſpel, God is

Ver. 3. ſaid, by *ſending his own Son in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, and ſo by his Sacrifice for Sin, *condemning Sin in the Fleſh*, to have done what the *Weakneſs* of the *Law* could not do.

Ver. 3. But this Weakneſs is obſerved to have been *through the Fleſh* too; *viz.* the Prevalence of that ſenſual and carnal Principle, which by betraying Men into Sin, rendered them ſtill more obnoxious to Death, in Proportion as the Precepts of the Law were multiplied. In order therefore to eſcape that Miſery, Sanctification is neceſſary alſo. Now this is effected by the Aſſiſtances and Influences of God's Holy Spirit, correcting that corrupt Principle called the *Fleſh*. Sanctifying Grace reſcues from the Dominion of Sin for the future, as juſtifying Grace releaſes from the Penalty of Sin paſt. And, in regard no other Covenant ever indented for the

Ver. 4, 5. Communications of this Spirit; in regard

Ver. 6. theſe alſo are merited by, and conſequent upon, the Death of Chriſt; in regard the Things, which make for Life and Peace, cannot be

be loved, purſued, or compaſſed without theſe, nor is God pleaſed with any of our Works, which are not agreeable, and indeed owing, to this Spirit: (For this is a diſtinguiſhing Character of them who belong to Chriſt.) Ver. 7, 8. Ver. 9.

From hence it is, that Happineſs and Immortality are, in this ſecond Reſpect alſo, repreſented, as Privileges, which give a juſt Preference to the Chriſtian, above any other Religion whatſoever.

But whence, it may be ſaid, all theſe vain Boaſts of Immortality, while it is plain, that even Chriſtians die in common with other Men? It is confeſſed. Nor does the Apoſtle attempt the Abſurdity of denying it, for he places their Privilege, in being reſtored to Life, and ſuch a future Life, as far excels any Advantages, poſſible to be reaped from their Continuance in the preſent Life, by never dying at all. This, he contends, is a Benefit entirely owing to Chriſt. For a right Underſtanding whereof, I ſhall briefly ſtate the Caſe, as it ſtood with Mankind in general, without Chriſt; and as it now, by Virtue of his Sufferings, ſtands both with human Nature at large, and with them in particular, who partake of his Spirit and his Holineſs. Ver. 10, 11.

The original Condition of Man appears to have been framed for Bliſs and Immortality. So that Death was no Part of the firſt Creation, but (as this Apoſtle obſerves) had been introduced by Sin. Not only actually dying then, but even the Capacity of dying, was properly a Penalty. And from a State, in which they *might* not, and, ſuppoſing them not to have tranſgreſſed, *could* not have died; our firſt Parents ſunk themſelves, and all their Poſterity at once, into a Condition, in which they could not but die: Nay, and ſo die, as no longer to be able, either to preſerve themſelves from Sorrow and Trouble in this Life; or to reſcue either their Bodies from Corruption, or their Souls from Miſery, whenever God ſhall think fit to call them hence. Ch. v. 12.

Now, in regard the whole human Nature had ſinned in *Adam*, this bodily Death ſtill paſſes upon all Men. But then, in Conſideration of the whole human Nature again ſuffering this Puniſhment in the Perſon of the Son of God, the Bodies of all Mankind ſhall be reſtored to Life again, and ſo united to their Souls, as to ſuffer no ſecond Separation. The Souls too of ſuch, as ſtrictly ſpeaking are Chriſt's, do, together with their Bodies, enter into a State of Bliſs endleſs and unconceivable. Thus full Reparation is made for the Loſs Mankind in general ſuſtained, by the Tranſgreſſion of the firſt *Adam*; in that, as then all died by one, ſo now all live again by one, their common Repreſentative. Nay, this is more than Reparation; in regard Death was inflicted for one Offence, but the Releaſe is from many, each whereof had incurred the ſame Penalty. But for that other Death of the Soul, which Men bring upon themſelves; they, who oppoſe thoſe Luſts that open the Way to it, and are guided by that Spirit, which is the Author and Principle of all Goodneſs to lapſed Men, are, notwithſtanding the Neceſſity of Bodily Death, infinite Gainers. For theſe Perſons are in much better Circumſtances, than if God ſhould have brought them back to thoſe of their common Anceſtor, even at the Time of his Innocence. It was, as I obſerved, poſſible for him not to die; but, becauſe he was under a Poſſibility of ſinning, 'tis evident he was likewiſe under a Poſſibility of dying: And conſequently, of continuing in Death for ever, ſuppoſing no Redemption by a ſecond *Adam*. Chriſtians, the very beſt of them, have, it is confeſs'd, Afflictions to conflict with, and bodily Death to undergo; but then from theſe they are tranſlated to another State, where they do not only neither ſin nor die; but where it is abſolutely impoſſible for them, either to ſin, or to die, any more.

See Chap. v. 12, *&c.*

And this is the Argument made uſe of at the 10th and 11th Verſes: The Certainty of a Reſurrection to Bliſs

Bliſs and Glory, for all them, who ſubmit themſelves to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. A Spirit, who is a Quickner as well as a Sanctifyer; the Giver of Holineſs, and the Giver of Life; the Giver of the Former, as an Earneſt and certain Foretaſte of the Latter. For Proof of this he argues, that the Graces of this Spirit are a Mark of the Chriſtian's Sonſhip, and that that Sonſhip was imparted by Adoption. A Method always taken, in order to confer on the Party ſo adopted, a Right to inherit the Eſtate of the Party adopting. But now, in regard the Benefit here mentioned is ſuch, as the preſent State is not capable of; it follows, that there muſt of neceſſity be another and more perfect State in reſerve, wherein the Profits of this Adoption may be fully made good and enjoyed. And it alſo follows, that the certain Proſpect of ſo complete a Happineſs is an abundant Encouragement and Support againſt any Afflictions of the Life we now lead, and againſt the Fear of that Death of the Body, which ſhall one Day be ſwallowed up in this endleſs and infinitely better Life: Of which Life the actual Poſſeſſion and Glories of that *Natural* Son of God, who was once dead, but now lives for evermore, give infallible Aſſurance to his *adopted* Sons. Ver. 14, 15, 16, 17.

Such ſeems to be the Connexion and true Force of the Apoſtle's Argument in this Place. Which, ſo far as it regards our Sonſhip, and the Inferences properly reſulting from thence, hath been largely conſidered ſome Time ago. The Privilege of *Inheriting*, conſequent to that Relation, I then referred to this Occaſion. Concerning which it ſhall ſuffice to make ſome few Remarks, as briefly as I can. *Epiſt. S. after* Chriſtmas.

Theſe Words at the 17th Verſe, *If Children then Heirs, Heirs with God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt*, are Expreſſions taken from among Men: And, as was hinted before, do particularly allude to the Cuſtoms, and Methods, and Deſign, of Adoption. My Intention at preſent is to aſſign ſome Reaſons, wherefore the Happineſs of good Men hereafter, which the holy Scripture hath

elſewhere mentioned by ſundry other Figures and Expreſſions, ſhould here be repreſented under the Notion of an *Inheritance:* What we may be allowed to draw from hence for our Comfort and Advantage; and what Engagements, we ought, upon this Account, to think ourſelves under, in Point of Duty and Obedience.

1. Now *Firſt*, The Epiſtle for the laſt Lord's Day ſets forth *Eternal Life* in the Quality of a *Gift*. And I there ſhewed it to be truly ſo, and that we are bound to eſteem, and thankfully to receive it as ſuch. And this was a very proper Repreſentation for that Place; where the Apoſtle deſigned to humble Men under a Senſe of their Sin, and the Puniſhments thus incurred: and to magnify God's Grace, in not only forbearing to execute the Juſtice they had deſerved, but in beſtowing a Happineſs, which they neither did nor could deſerve. But here his Buſineſs is to fortify Men againſt the Hardſhips and Temptations of a malicious and dangerous World, Diſtreſſes, and Perſecutions, and even Death itſelf. Now, in order hereunto, it was neceſſary to propoſe their future Happineſs, in Terms of the utmoſt Aſſurance; ſuch as might juſtify the moſt abſolute Dependence upon the Poſſeſſion of it. But now a Gift implies the Diſpoſer to be ſo perfectly at his own Liberty, that, if he beſtow it, it is a Favour and an Obligation; if he withhold it, no Hurt is done, or Occaſion of Complaint given. And, which Way could this miniſter that firm and confident Perſuaſion, which frail and yielding Fleſh and Blood finds little enough, to ſuſtain Faith againſt Senſe, and to render ſpiritual and diſtant Joys an Overbalance for preſent and bodily Sufferings? Yet even to this Effect, great and difficult as Experience proves it to be, muſt the Notion of an Inheritance be admitted for an adequate Cauſe. This naturally turns our Thoughts upon the Manner in uſe among Men, for ſecuring Eſtates to their Poſterity. It deſcribes Chriſtians, not as younger Sons, whoſe Portions the Parent hath kept in his own Diſpoſal; but as ſo many Firſt-born, for whom a certain

Rom. vi. 23.

a certain Proviſion is made, Deeds of Conveyance irrevocably executed, and a ſure Claim in Law to all the Honours and Advantages, which, by the Anceſtors Quality, are poſſible to deſcend in the elder Line. In regard therefore this is the beſt grounded Expectation, and upon that Account called very ſignificantly a Settlement, among Men; when Almighty God condeſcends to call Chriſtians *Heirs*; ſuch are hereby juſtified in the higheſt Degree of Filial Truſt; they may without Arrogance plead their Title; nay they cannot ſuſpect, that this Conveyance will not hold good without incurring the Guilt of a diſhonourable Reflection, upon the Kindneſs, and Truth, of their Father which is in Heaven.

Now the Duties ariſing from this Conſideration are, a ſtedfaſt Affiance in Him, whoſe Promiſes are ſure, and his Purpoſes unchangeable. But then that Affiance muſt be built upon a Holy Life, as it's proper Foundation and only true Support. For even Heirs in the Eye of the Law may evacuate their own Title; by provoking their Parents to cut off an Entail, or by an Attainder, that ſhall forfeit their Pretenſions. It is true, Immortal Exiſtence ſhall be every Man's Portion: But whether we ſhall exiſt in Happineſs, or Miſery, will depend upon our own Behaviour. For our Father hath kept it ſtill in his Power, to puniſh undutiful and obſtinate Children: And St. *Paul* acquaints us here, that thoſe Sons only are Heirs, whoſe being *led by the Spirit of God* proves them to be Sons indeed. And for Them who are ſuch, I would earneſtly recommend another Duty, naturally deduced from the Conſideration before us, which is, the Love and Study of the Holy Scriptures. Theſe are the Deeds, in which our Title is ſet forth. The Privileges we are endowed with, and the Conditions of our Tenure, are to be learned only from hence. And therefore our Time can be no where better employed, no where with greater Profit, if we would ſecure, no where

where with greater Delight, if we duly value and desire, this blest Inheritance.

2. The same may be said, *Secondly*, in regard of the Certainty and Duration of this future Happiness. The Stability whereof is by the Allusion before us very fitly intimated. For, whereas other Tenures are determined to a certain Period of Time, Estates of Inheritance submit to no such Limitations. These descend successively to all Posterity, and are fixed as firm, as the Condition of this World will allow any Thing to be. Thus the Bliss, we are encouraged to promise ourselves in that other and better World, is a lasting and unchangeable Good. No Term of Years can wear our Title out, no Accident can deprive us of the Possession. The Excellence of the Joys prepared for Good Men, is a Consideration, which alone would justify our most ardent Desires and eager Pursuits of them. But that, which crowns all other Commendations of them, is the leaving no Room for Fears and melancholy Prospects; the conceiving Heaven to be a *continuing City*, a permanent Abode. Without this, the more exquisite its Delights are, the more afflicting must even the most distant Possibility of parting with them be. But this fills the Mind with perfect Acquiescence, and raises our Ideas of such a Father's Love; who hath provided a Settlement for his Children, which nothing can waste or shake, which even our own Hopes and Wishes cannot look beyond, nay which our utmost Stretch of Thought cannot distinctly comprehend, but must depend upon his Word and Truth for the Belief of.

And, shall I need to say, that our Duty resulting from this happy Circumstance is, to take off our Affections from *Things on the Earth, and to set them on Things above?* To contemplate that promised Enjoyment, and its Advantages, which so manifestly distinguish it from all attainable here below: Where Time and Casualty have such an uncontrouled

Coloss. iii. 2.

trouled Dominion, and ſcarce any Man arrives to ſo abſurd a Degree of Extravagance, as to imagine it but barely poſſible, for his Tenure to continue always? Particularly, how ſhould this reconcile the Thoughts and Approaches of Death to a good Man, who hath reaſon to eſteem it a deſirable Tranſlation, from a State, wherein all Things are in a perpetual Flux, to one where all are conſtant and immutable; from One, where even our imperfect Happineſs is bounded within a very ſhort Space; to One, where alone we can be completely happy, and where we are ſure to be completely ſo for ever and ever.

3. As I obſerved before, that our future Happineſs is ſometimes mentioned in the Quality of a *Gift*, ſo is it at other Times, under the Notion of a Reward. And hence ariſes a *Third* Convenience of this Alluſion, in that it takes away all Ground for thoſe vain Preſumptions, which we are ſo apt to cheriſh, concerning the Merit of our own Performances. It is very poſſible for a Steward, or even for one, who in much meaner Capacity retains to the Family, to approve himſelf more uſeful to its Intereſts, than any Child in it. But, whatever Recompence ſuch Fidelity may deſerve, yet can no Legal Claim to the Inheritance be grounded upon it; becauſe this hath Alliance, and Blood, for its Foundation. And therefore St. *Paul*'s Argument proceeds, *If Sons, then Heirs.* Now our Sonſhip and Adoption is God's free Act: conferred at our firſt Entrance into Covenant with him, and conſequently at a Time, when there is as yet no Service that can be pleaded. So that the Notions of Heaven being an Inheritance, and that of meriting by our own Works, are plainly incompatible; and will, upon due Examination, be found mutually to deſtroy each other.

This therefore teaches every Chriſtian, to obey with the profoundeſt Humility, and to expect a Compenſation with all poſſible Thankfulneſs: To acknowledge the Grace and Munificence of Almighty God; and

and to remember, what Affection, as well as Duty, ſhould be paid to ſo liberal and kind a Father. Which leads me to conſider;

4. *Fourthly*, How fitly this Metaphor of an Inheritance is choſen, to make us ſenſible, of that Fulneſs of Joy imported by it, and what a plentiful Proviſion this Heavenly Father hath laid up in ſtore for every Child of his. It ſeems, we are not dealt with like younger Branches of a Family, who muſt be content with ſuch ſcanty Proportions, as can commodiouſly be ſpared out of an Eſtate, the Groſs whereof is reſerved for keeping up the Honour, or the Name, in that One, who hath the good Fortune to be the Eldeſt. The Narrowneſs of our Poſſeſſions upon Earth require ſuch Diſtinctions, and wary Diſtributions. But it is the Pre-eminence of our heavenly Inheritance, that there will be enough for every Partaker of it. All that the largeſt Heart can aſk or think; and no one Child ſhall feel himſelf ſtraitened there, by any other's Abundance. So far from this, that every one's Faculties ſhall be enlarged, to render him ſtill capable of more and more; and the Joy of every other glorified Spirit ſhall be an Addition to each one's Own.

And, is it not a natural Effect of this Particular, to raiſe our Love and Deſires of that All-ſufficient Bliſs; and in the mean while, to inſpire us with Meekneſs and Patience and Contentment, under any Afflictions that ſhall befal us here? We are now in the Quality of Heirs under Age; and it is reaſonable, we ſhould ſubmit to proper Methods of Education and Diſcipline. In which, if ſome Hardſhips be undergone; yet are thoſe neceſſary, for qualifying us to make a becoming Figure, when we ſhall come to be put into Poſſeſſion. Now this the Author to the *Hebrews* affirms to be the expreſs Caſe of the Sons of God, whom he *chaſtiſes* for their mighty Profit, that they may *be Partakers of his Holineſs*. Moſt reaſonably therefore do thoſe Children act, who comply readily with

Heb. xii. 5—10.

with His Meaſures of Improvement, and refer all to their Heavenly Father's Wiſdom, in that Spirit of Contentment and entire Reſignation, of which the Church hath ſet us a Pattern, in her Collect for this Day: Teaching us, that not any of theſe Things can come upon us without his Knowledge or Appointment: and therefore humbly *beſeeching Him, whoſe never failing Providence ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth, to put away from us all hurtful Things, and to give us thoſe Things which be profitable for us, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

The Eighth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matt. vii. 15.

15. *BEware of falſe Prophets, which come to you in Sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves.*

PARAPHRASE.

15. The Way to Life (mentioned Ver. 13, 14.) you will be in Danger of being ſeduced from, by the deſigning Craftineſs of ſome ill Men. Who, perſonating Teachers and Promoters of Truth and Virtue, do in reality deſign the Overthrow of both.

16. *Ye ſhall know them by their Fruits: Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thiſtles?*

16. But in Time their own wicked Practices, and the pernicious Conſequences of their Principles will diſcover what they are. For theſe will naturally retain the Good, or the Evil, of the Man and his Opinions.

17. *Even ſo every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit, but a corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit.*

18. *A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit: neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit.*

19. *Every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the Fire.*

20. *Wherefore by their Fruits ye ſhall know them.*

21. It is not the bare Profeſſion or the teaching of my Goſpel, that ſhall carry any Man to Heaven; but a conſcientious and diligent Obſervance of the Rules of Life laid down there.

21. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doeth the Will of my Father, which is in Heaven.*

COMMENT.

IN treating of this Paſſage, I ſhall endeavour to explain thoſe Fruits, which our Lord here directs us to obſerve, in order to the Diſcovery of falſe Teachers; and withal to obſerve, as briefly as I can, how proper and ſufficient a Mark theſe are, to detect them by.

1. I will conſider the Fruits directed to here, in order to the Diſcovery of *falſe Prophets* or Teachers. I ſay *Prophets* or Teachers; becauſe not only ſuch as foretold future Events, but they alſo, whoſe Profeſſion and Errand it was to inſtruct the People in their Duty, (and in this Place They eſpecially) are ſignified under the Title of Prophets.

Now in this Conſideration it behoves us to take good Heed: becauſe the miſtaking our Marks, and fixing upon any that are not ſuch, ſpoils all; and leaves us as liable to be deceived, and undone by the Falſhood of thoſe Prophets, as if no ſuch Marks had ever been left us at all.

Some few ſeem to lay a Streſs upon that Expreſſion of *Coming*; as if our Saviour meant, that theſe *falſe Prophets* are not ſent by God, upon His Errand, or with His Commiſſion, as the True always are; but *come* of their own Head, and undertake to teach, without any competent Authority, or lawful Call, ſo to do.

Ver. 15.

And this Manner of Coming is no Doubt a weighty Objection againſt ſuch Men. It argues want of Modeſty, great Arrogance indeed, when they affect and uſurp

uſurp a Dominion over the Conſciences of their Brethren: It ſpeaks a factious Spirit, and Contempt of Diſcipline and good Order, when they thruſt themſelves into ſo important a Charge, without the regular Methods of attaining it: It miniſters juſt Cauſe of Jealouſy, and provokes us to ſuſpect them of Falſhood and evil Deſign, who refuſe to ſubmit their Abilities and their Principles, to the Trial of public Perſons, appointed to examine, and approve, and judge, who be duly qualified to lead the Flock, and who are unfit to be truſted with ſo great a Care. Upon all theſe Accounts, the *Coming*, thus underſtood, may very well be allowed to put us upon our Guard, againſt the bold and forward Senders of themſelves. But certainly this Senſe of the Word is little, if at all concerned, in the Place now before us.

For this cannot be ſuch a Note of Diſtinction, as ſhall enable us to diſtinguiſh between the Wolf and the Sheep. He, who wants a legal Authority, may poſſibly teach nothing but Truth, and intend nothing but Good. This, I ſay, may poſſibly be, though we have reaſon to fear, it very ſeldom is ſo. On the other Hand, He who hath ſuch an Authority, may abuſe it to vile Purpoſes; He may betray the Truſt committed to Him: And, though a rightful Shepherd, as to all outward Qualifications, may lead the Sheep aſtray. Nay, he may take the Advantage of his Character, for doing it with more Security and Efficacy. Error then does not inſeparably go along with the Prophets, who thus *come*; nor Truth with them that are ſent. And indeed the Fruits here ſeem to be ſomewhat ſubſequent to their Coming; and the Judgment, to be made concerning them, muſt be formed, upon the Manner, not of their Coming, but of their Behaviour afterwards, and the Effects of the exerciſing the Office of Teachers.

2. Others

2. Others therefore, and thoſe Interpreters of Eminence and Renown, by *Fruits* here underſtand the Lives and Converſations of the *Prophets*. And then our Saviour's Admonition will import thus much: That Men are not raſhly and haſtily to give in to the Doctrines of their Teachers, till convinced, by the Piety and Virtue of their Behaviour, that they are approved by God. For Truth and Holineſs ſpring from the ſame Root, and commendable Practices are the genuine Product of ſound Principles. On the other hand, ſome Vices there are ſo natural to falſe Teachers, that it is hardly poſſible to evade the Diſcovery they make. Such are, Declining of Hardſhips, by ſhuffling and tampering with their Conſciences, when the Cauſe of Religion calls them to ſuffer: Indirect promoting their own private Intereſt, by ſoothing their Hearers, the wealthy and honourable among them eſpecially, in their Follies and Vices: Inſiſting, with Heat and Vehemence, upon controverted Points of little or no Conſequence to the Subſtance and Advancement of true Chriſtianity: Taking indecent Liberties in aſperſing Others, particularly Perſons of Authority and Power, that ſuch bold and free Speaking may acquire them the Reputation of uncommon Impartiality and Sanctity: When Men accommodate themſelves and their Doctrines to theſe or the like Purpoſes; they ſoon betray their Caution to be the Effect of Cowardice, their pretended Compliance and Good Manners, to be Covetouſneſs and Ambition, their Zeal to be Pride and Faction, and their officious Reproving to be Envy and Cenſoriouſneſs. And although ſuch a Man may diſſemble for awhile; yet Hypocriſy, like every other Violence upon Nature, is of no long Continuance. The Sheeps Cloathing will drop off, and the Wolf will ſhew himſelf, provided we have Patience, and take Care, to watch the Diſguiſe narrowly. But if a Teacher

Grotius.

Teacher be, and perſevere in being, a Man of blameleſs Behaviour; we may depend upon Safety under his Guidance, and that he is rightly fitted for becoming an Inſtrument of Good to Us. For the Tree is to be known by his Fruit, and the Man by his Manners. Theſe are Virtuous and Holy, and ſo warrant our concluding His Doctrine to be Orthodox and Profitable.

This, I ſay, is a *Second* Conſtruction put upon the Paſſage. Which yet, with all due Reſpect to the great Names that have acquieſced in it, appears to be attended with Two Difficulties, not eaſy to be got over. For, by making a Teacher's Life, the Teſt of his Doctrine, *Two* Things ſeem to be ſuppoſed: *Firſt*, That all Mens Principles and Practices are really, and at Bottom, both of a Piece. And, *Secondly*, That we may clearly and ſufficiently underſtand, whether our Teachers be truly Good, or Bad Men.

The *former* Suppoſition ſeems neceſſary upon this Account; becauſe, admitting any Inconſiſtence between a Man's real Principles and his Practice, no certain Concluſion can be drawn from the Nature of his Works, to the Nature of his Doctrine; and ſo thoſe Works can be no certain Mark. The *Second* ſeems likewiſe neceſſary, becauſe, granting that every Teacher cannot be ſo throughly known to another, as ſhall enable him poſitively to pronounce, that ſuch a One is a Good or an Ill Man; it will follow, that thoſe Works can be no Mark at all. Theſe are Objections worthy a little Attention, and therefore I will conſider them diſtinctly.

1. It is but too manifeſtly falſe, that all Men live juſt as they teach, or as they believe; or that their Principles and Practices are at bottom both of a Piece. At firſt Sight One would think it (and doubtleſs it is) very natural, they ſhould be ſo. But when One looks more cloſely into the Matter, many ſubſtantial Reaſons

are to be found, why in fact it is otherwiſe. The infinite Tranſgreſſions againſt the Light of Nature, or againſt the acknowledged Precepts of revealed Religion (even when the preſent Dictates and Checks of Conſcience conſpire to diſſuade, to deter from them) are undeniable Evidences of this Caſe. And, how abſurd ſoever it may appear, for a Man to act counter to his own Senſe and Judgment; yet will our Wonder ceaſe, when it is remembered, how differently Men are moved to imbibe any Opinion, from the Manner, in which they are moved, in Point of Behaviour and Action. Thus the Thing will ſoon be made appear as practicable, as Experience proves it to be common.

For when they embrace any Perſuaſion, this is a Work of Time and Debate: They are preſumed to examine, and ſee, on which Side the Weight of the Cauſe lies; and to caſt in their Aſſent accordingly. But an Opinion thus embraced, though lodged in the Mind, is not thereby enabled to influence the Converſation. For the Faith, capable of this Effect, muſt be much more, than a bare and hiſtorical Aſſent to the Truth. It muſt be a lively and vigorous Perſuaſion; it muſt be well digeſted, warmly applied, always at Hand to oppoſe againſt Temptations, reſolute to reſiſt, and ſtrong to overcome. Now this is a Frame of Mind, which no Man at all Times is in. For, let the Judgment be never ſo rightly informed, yet the Infirmities of corrupt Nature are ſo many, the Paſſions ſo violent, the Surpriſes upon it ſo ſudden, and the Aſſaults ſo thick; that even well intending Men cannot always behave themſelves, as they would do at Leiſure, in cool Blood, and when Reaſon could be fairly brought to bear againſt the Biaſs of Appetite and Intereſt. It is indeed a good Man's Care to watch and keep a ſtrict Guard over himſelf; but a bad Man, though over-powered by his own Fault,

does

does not presently renounce, and give up, those Tenets, which tell him he ought to subdue his Appetites. A sound Belief, and Knowledge in Teaching, depend, in great Measure, upon good Parts, serious Study, fair Arguing, and sound Judgment: But the living up to what we know and believe, depend upon a thousand Actions and Events; upon Things done in heat and hurry, when Reason is disturbed, and Thoughts divided, and the Guards of our Souls either asleep through Frailty, or are borne down by some rebellious Inclination. So that even good Men may, in acting, swerve sometimes from their Principles; and Bad Men, when they think and reason sedately, may be found to retain very sound Opinions. These may have very discerning Faculties, and may use their Wit and their Learning in the Defence of Religion; and yet they may not mortify their Affections, so as to adorn the Cause, which they can very notably defend. They may act such Things, as, when compared with the Principles acknowledged by them, are perfectly incongruous and absurd; and such, as themselves do, in their soberer Reflexions, disallow and detest. In a word, every Man, who stands self-condemned for sinning against his own Conscience, is an Instance, that Principles and Practices are not always of a Piece. And if a Man may believe aright, and yet live amiss; then his Actions can be no Standard for receiving or rejecting his Opinions. For, according to this State of the Case, a *good Tree may bring forth evil Fruit*, quite contrary to our Lord's Observation. Ver. 18.

On the other hand, Men of false and dangerous Principles may also do good Actions, as they are commonly called and understood. They may do them from Shame, and fear of Reproach; They may do them for Interest or Reputation, out of Covetousness, Pride, or Vain-glory; Nay, they may do them, to qualify themselves for passing better upon the World,

and for deceiving more effectually. For, ſuppoſing the Life of a *Prophet* no competent Rule to judge his Doctrines by; yet muſt his Example be granted of conſiderable Influence, to draw Followers after him. A profligate and vile Teacher is naturally (as he deſerves to be) declined and abhorred: As a pious and exemplary One is very powerful to perſuade. This they are ſenſible of, who ſo often make an Affectation of uncommon Auſterities, and Preciſeneſs, a Part of that *Sheeps Cloathing*, in which they diſguiſe themſelves. But when the Wolf is ſtript, then it appears that ſuch extraordinary Sanctimony was all to ſerve a Turn: Only *that the People might fall unto them*, and becauſe *thereout they ſuck no ſmall Advantage*. If then, not only Men of ſound Belief and Opinion may act and live diſagreeably to their own Senſe and Profeſſion; but alſo Men of unſound and dangerous Opinions may put on a Face of Virtue, and do Good with ill Deſign: It follows, I think, that our Lord's Meaning muſt extend to ſomewhat elſe, beſides the Prophet's Works. Otherwiſe his Parabolical Alluſion will not hold good in either Branch of it. For at this rate, *a good Tree may bring forth evil Fruit*, according to the *Former*, and *an evil Tree may bring forth good Fruit*, according to the *Latter*, of theſe Inſtances; *i. e.* admitting the Doctrines and Principles of the *Prophet* to be the *Tree*, and the Actions of his Life for the *Fruit*, or a competent Mark given, whereby to diſtinguiſh the *Tree*.

2. But there is yet a *Second* Difficulty, under which this Conſtruction labours. 'Tis, that it ſuppoſes the Spiritual State of theſe *Prophets* capable of being ſo perfectly known, that their Hearers ſhall from thence be able to pronounce each of them a truly Good or Ill Man. This Difficulty indeed is far from being equal in both the Parts of it. Wickedneſs is ſometimes ſo manifeſt, ſo ſhameleſs, ſo exceeding enormous, that one may be aſſured of another's bad State, ſo long as he

he continues in that Courſe of Life. But Hypocriſy is often ſo dextrous in the Arts of Diſſembling, that it ſhall not be poſſible to purſue it, through all its Windings and Doublings, ſo as peremptorily to determine, who is the truly Good Man. The fartheſt we can go, is to Words and Actions. And theſe will not furniſh Matter ſufficient to go upon. For every Man's Virtue muſt ſtand or fall, by the Sincerity of his Heart, the Bent of his Will, the Ends he propoſes, and the Regularity of his Meaſures in proſecuting thoſe Ends. Now theſe I have formerly proved to be Things, in great Part locked up from Human Sight, and ſuch as lie open to the Searcher of Hearts only: And therefore by Him only is the Good and Evil of every Man truly underſtood. A Man may pray for real Devotion, and he may pray to be ſeen of Men. He may give Alms out of Charity, and he may give out of Oſtentation. He may be of a ſad Countenance when he faſts, out of hearty Sorrow and godly Remorſe; and he may look ſad, becauſe he hath disfigured his Face, on Purpoſe to appear mortified to the World. He may *preach Chriſt* out of Zeal and *Good-will*; and he may *preach him even of Envy and Strife*. Mean while they, to whom nothing appears in Evidence, but the Prayer, and the Alms, and the Countenance, and the Preaching, cannot be certain in the Cauſe of theſe Things. We ought, it is true, always to hope and think the beſt; but a Judgment of Charity is too weak a Foundation, to build our Faith upon. For that is but paſſing a favourable Sentence, upon ſomewhat not perfectly known. And ſurely much needs not be ſaid to convince Men, that what cannot be perfectly known itſelf, cannot be admitted for a competent Rule, to judge and know other Things by. Conſequently, if our utmoſt Skill cannot penetrate into the Holineſs or Hypocriſy of a

Ep. 3 *S. in* Adv.

Matt. vi.

Phil. i. 15.

Prophet, this cannot be the adequate Notion of *Fruits* here, which are declared a ſufficient Diſtinction to judge his Doctrines by.

III. Hence ſome have directed us to a *Third* Characteriſtic, and conceive our Lord to mean the Natural Conſequences and Effects of the Doctrines themſelves; and the Practices, which, if purſued through all thoſe Conſequences, they lead their Aſſertors and their Hearers into.

Theſe Interpreters have rightly conſidered, that the *Falſe Prophets*, in the Place before us, were Men making outward Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith: That, as in ſuch Caſes is uſual, they took Advantage from Truth, to propagate Error: That all Deceivers begin well, and do not let thoſe, they intend to ſeduce, into the Secret at once; but, by fair and unexceptionable Pretences, inſinuate themſelves into the Eſteem and Affections of the People: That when by Degrees their Authority is eſtabliſhed, and their Followers at their Devotion; they then open the Scene with Artifice, ſcatter their Poiſon cunningly gilded over, and make ſuch vile Impreſſions, as an implicit Belief and Obedience, and a partial Admiration of their Perſons, have opened the Way to, and rendred their Adherents ripe for.

Upon this Account our Bleſſed Saviour is preſumed to command, in the Paſſage now before us, that we do not haſtily yield ourſelves to the Garb, and outward Appearance, of the Prophets. But, that we follow warily, and look well, whither it is they would lead us. If they take Occaſions of ingratiating themſelves by Doctrines confeſſedly good; and afterwards begin to unmaſk, and let fall ſuch as are a Breach of, or Diſparagement to, Piety and Charity: If they indulge formal Superſtitions, lay mighty Streſs upon idle Ceremonies, place Religion where it is not, and pretend to diſpenſe with the weightier Matters of the Law; if they

under-

undervalue Juſtice and common Honeſty in Dealing, and the Duties peculiar to our reſpective Relations and Condition in the World; if we find them tampering with State-Affairs, flattering Princes, and countenancing Oppreſſion and Tyranny; or cajolling Subjects, and, under the Name of Liberty, encouraging Diſobedience and Faction: If they ſow Seeds of Diſcord, and kindle or foment Diviſion and Separation, and mutual Hatred and Heats: If they would perſuade us to lie for God, or do Evil that Good may come; In ſhort, if they ſet aſide any known Duty, or advance any known Sin; Theſe are *Evil Fruits*, and, we may depend upon it, the *Tree*, which brings them forth, is a corrupt *Tree*: The Prophets, I mean, perſuading, and the Doctrines tending to them, are ſuch, as our Lord commands us to beware of, and to avoid.

But then, upon this Occaſion, we muſt take Care to put a Difference (for a mighty Difference there is) between the Prophet being guilty of theſe Things in his Practice, and infuſing or juſtifying them in his Doctrine. No Preacher is free from ſome Sin; but I hope none is ſo abandoned, as to proclaim Liberty to any. A Man may commit Evil, without calling it Good; and he may neglect Good, without traducing it with the Name of Evil. And in them who do ſo, the Fault reaches no farther than their private and perſonal Capacity. A ſcandalous Prophet hath a terrible Account to make; and the worſe, for bringing his Office and Character into Diſeſteem. But the Wickedneſs of his Life, which renders him one of the worſt of Men, does not prove him a falſe Teacher. For to ſuch as theſe, *who ſay and do not*, is our Saviour's Command, with regard to the Phariſees, to be applied. *They ſit in* Moſes's *Seat*, (have a regular Call and juſt Authority) *All therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do; but do not ye after their Works.* It were greatly to Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

be wiſhed, that every one of our Lives recommended and repreſented our Sermons; but where they do not, he that ſpeaks is a Prophet ſtill. A wicked, but not a *falſe* Prophet; for he condemns his own Actions out of his own Mouth. And the Duty of his People upon this Occaſion is, not to withdraw from his Teaching, or ſeparate from his Communion; but to attend to, and edify under, and pray for, him. To do the Good, which his Inſtructions plainly inculcate; but not to follow the Evil, which his Example may be thought to encourage. All this agrees exactly with our Lord's Diſcourſe, who in this Warning was not concerned to take Notice of the perſonal Corruptions of *falſe Prophets*; but of ſuch only, as affected their public Capacity. And ſuch moſt properly are thoſe pernicious Notions and Practices, which the Doctrines they inſtill naturally lead to, and are juſtly chargeable withal.

Once more, (which draws this matter to a Point) of theſe Corruptions and Conſequences it may ſafely be affirmed, that they come always of Evil; and of the true and ſound Doctrines, that they always come of Good. In this caſe the Fruit never degenerates, but diſcriminates the Tree on which it grew. Which is equivalent with ſaying, that theſe are a certain Rule to detect falſe Teachers by. For,

1. Theſe Evidences cannot be counterfeited, as other Marks may. The Vulgar are often deluded by bold Pretenders to immediate Impulſes of the Spirit, and told, theſe ſuperſede the Neceſſity of an Ordinary and Legal Call. *Many*, Saint *Paul* obſerves, are *deceived by good Works and fair Speeches*; nay, our Lord here foretels, that even *Miracles wrought in his Name* ſhould be boaſted of by Perſons, whom yet he *never knew*. But ſtill theſe Advantages are but in the Quality of Leaves. They add much to the Beauty, but they do not

Rom. xvi. 28.

Ver. 22, 23.

not ſufficiently prove the Goodneſs, of the Tree. The Thorn and the Thiſtle carry a gayer Bloſſom, and a more fragrant Flower, than the Vine and the Fig-tree: but the Grape and the Fig give theſe a juſt pre-eminence. In like Manner, Seducers may make ſome plauſible Appearance, but this is Pomp and Shew; for the Subſtance and Solidity lies in the Principles they advance. And no Diſguiſe can hide theſe from a careful Examiner. For no Opinion truly good can promote any moral Evil: Nor can any Opinion really evil lead to the Practice of moral Good. In this Caſe the Tree that is once corrupt, will always be ſo, and nothing but Corruption can come from it: And that Doctrine which is once Good, will continue ſuch; and Juſtice, and Mercy, and Holineſs, are the genuine Fruit of it. For God hath ſet eternal Barriers between this Sort of Good and Evil. The Fountains of everlaſting Salvation cannot be liable to the Inconſiſtence, mentioned by St. *James*, of ſending out *at the ſame Place both ſweet Waters and bitter*. No. Where the Spring is pure, the Streams will be clear and freſh: but, where that is polluted, all that iſſues from it, can be no better than *Snares of Death, and Overflowings of Ungodlineſs*. James iii. 11.

2. As unreaſonable it is, *Secondly*, to ſuppoſe, that they, who are principally concerned to promote moral Good and Evil in the World, ſhould chooſe Means ſo incongruous for effecting it, as might render thoſe Inferences uncertain, by which we conclude the Nature of the Tree, or Doctrine, from the Fruits or Conſequences juſtly charged upon, and manifeſtly reſulting from it. For here our Saviour's Maxim will take Place, that *a Houſe ſo divided againſt itſelf could not ſtand*. And yet, to ſuppoſe the Diſtinction before us falſe, is plainly to divide *God* and *Satan*, each againſt himſelf. Suppoſe the *Fruit be good*, and the *Tree Corrupt*; this makes *Satan* to promote Piety and Virtue: Imagine the *Tree Good*, and the *Fruit Corrupt*, and this makes God

God to promote Wickedneſs and Error; than which there cannot be a greater Contradiction to each of their Natures, Intereſts, and Deſigns.

God is a God of Truth and Goodneſs. Theſe he loves, encourages, and advances; and, for that Purpoſe, makes uſe of Means, that are good and true, and naturally fitted to bring about thoſe Ends. But it cannot be for the Honour of Virtue, to have Men cheated into it, by Methods of Falſhood and Trick; nor does it ſuit with the Wiſdom of our great Guide and Governor, to lead Men by wrong and dangerous Paths, rather than by a direct Way, that is plain and eaſy and ſafe. What need then can there be of falſe Prophets, and falſe Principles, when the true will inſtruct Men ſo much better? And to apprehend, that he intends to lead them into Error and Impiety, is to make him ceaſe to be God, and to do the Devil's Drudgery. Since then God cannot deſign to lead Men into Evil and Deſtruction, nor chooſe falſe Doctrines for bringing them to the Knowledge of the Truth; it follows, that ſuch Doctrines cannot be uſed by, or ſuppoſed to come from, God at all.

As abſurd would it be, to think the Devil inſtrumental in the Advancement of Piety and Virtue; which yet are certainly advanced, ſo oft as true Principles are inſtilled into us. His Character is a *Liar and the Father of it*; and can ſuch a one favour and propagate Truth? He is *a Murderer from the Beginning*; and can a Spirit, whoſe Eſſence is Envy and Malice, ſcatter Exhortations to Juſtice, and Order, and Charity, and Peace, and Meekneſs, and mutual Love? He is a *Slanderer*; and can it conſiſt with ſuch a Diſpoſition, to diſcountenance and condemn all Railing, and Reviling, and Cenſoriouſneſs, and Detraction? Judge therefore with yourſelves, whether ſuch *Fruits* as theſe do not ſufficiently diſtinguiſh their *Tree*; whether every one, who thus preaches Chriſt, be not of God; whether the

John viii. 44.

Ibid.

the Spirits, that encourage the contrary, be not of that wicked One: Whether therefore it be not of the laſt Conſequence to *try*, and not raſhly to *believe every Spirit:* Since ſome, how ſmoothly or how zealouſly ſoever they may carry the Matter, are yet ſuch as fall under St. *Paul*'s Cenſure, of *ſerving not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Belly.* Deceit is the Buſineſs of their Trade, and Gain the Bottom of all their boaſted Godlineſs.

1 John iv. 1.

Rom. xvi. 18.

So very great Reaſon have we, to attend with all Diligence to our Saviour's Caution here: To ſtudy the Holy Scriptures: Which will, which alone can, enable us rightly to judge of the Prophets, whether they be real Sheep, or Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing; and in eſpecial Manner to pray God, that he would *put away from us* falſe Teachers, thoſe worſt of *all hurtful Things*; *and give us* virtuous and true Teachers, who deſerve ſo highly to be reckoned among the Principal of *thoſe Things, that be profitable for us, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

Collect.

The Ninth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

GRANT to us, Lord, we beſeech thee, the Spirit to think and do always ſuch Things as be rightful, that we, who cannot do any Thing that is Good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy Will, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

John xv. 5.

The EPISTLE.

1 Cor. x. 1.

1. *BRethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our Fathers were under the Cloud, and all paſſed through the Sea.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. For an effectual Incentive to your Diligence and Care, I deſire you to recollect what

what happened to the Iſraelites heretofore. They were conducted out of *Egypt* under the Protection of a bright Cloud, denoting God's Preſence of Favour with them; they paſſed through the Red Sea, miraculouſly dried up to give them Way.

2. This covering of the Cloud, and ſafe Conduct through the Sea, as they reſembled the Ceremonies of the Chriſtian Baptiſm, (the being put under, and riſing out of Water) ſo did they anſwer the ſame End too. For upon this miraculous Deliverance, they entered into Covenant with, and profeſſed their Faith in God.

2. *And were all baptized unto Moſes in the Cloud and in the Sea;*

3, 4. They alſo were fed with Manna, and drank of Water out of the Rock; which were not a bodily Suſtenance only, but of a Sacramental Nature, and Types of Chriſt. (See John vi.)

3. *And did all eat the ſame ſpiritual Meat;*

4. *And did all drink the ſame ſpiritual Drink. For they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Chriſt.*

5. And yet, when theſe Men ſo highly favoured grew diſobedient, their ſingular Privileges notwithſtanding, they were deſtroyed, and never arrived at the Promiſed Land.

5. *But with many of them God was not well pleaſed: For they were overthrown in the Wilderneſs.*

6. Which is a Warning to us to avoid their Crimes, leſt otherwiſe we be like them in their Puniſhments. See Numb. xi.

6. *Now theſe Things were our Examples, to the Intent we ſhould not luſt after evil Things, as they alſo luſted.*

7. See *Exod.* xxxii.

7. *Neither be ye Idolaters, as were ſome of them, as it is written, The People ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play.*

8. There are two Slaughters taken Notice of in *Numb.* xxv. The one, commanded of God, and, at *Moſes*'s Order, executed by the Judges upon the Idolaters. See Ver. 1 to 6. The other, of them who died by God's own Hand, of the Plague, mentioned Ver. 9. The Sum of the Slain is there computed at 24000, who are ſaid to die *in*, (or as it is expreſſed, Ver. 18. *in the Day of*) *the Plague.* Among whom *Moſes* is ſuppoſed to reckon them alſo, who fell by the Hands of Public Juſtice, Ver. 5, 6. St. *Paul* hath been thought, on the other Hand, to refer to thoſe only, who died of the Peſtilence, when counting here but 23000.

8. *Neither let us commit Fornication, as ſome of them committed, and fell in one Day three and twenty Thouſand.*

9. *Neither*

9. *Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted, and were deſtroyed of Serpents.*

9. See *Numb.* xxi.

10. *Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the Deſtroyer.*

10. See *Numb.* xvi. 2—37.

11. *Now all theſe Things happened unto them for Enſamples: And they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come.*

11. Theſe Dealings with God's Church heretofore are Images and Types of his Dealings with the Chriſtians under this laſt Diſpenſation, the Goſpel; and check all thoſe Preſumptions, too commonly entertained, upon the external Privileges of Religion.

12. *Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.*

12. And therefore let none build ſo much upon theſe, as to imagine it impoſſible for him to periſh, becauſe he is one of God's peculiar and covenanted People.

13. *There hath no Temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to Man: But God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the Temptation alſo make a Way to eſcape, that you may be able to bear it.*

13. And, if Fear of ſuffering ſhake your good Reſolutions; Conſider, that as hitherto you have not been reduced to any great Extremities; ſo neither will God at any Time lay this Burthen ſo heavy, as that they, who faithfully do their Part, ſhall have Reaſon to complain, that he hath been wanting in his. For ſuch ſhall always find Aſſiſtances of Divine Grace, ſufficient to ſupport them under the ſharpeſt Afflictions.

COMMENT.

THE Chapter next before, had concluded with very preſſing Exhortations to Diligence, and Zeal in our Chriſtian Courſe; enforced by the Apoſtle's own Example, who in his own Caſe found this neceſſary, to prevent his being *at laſt a Caſt-away*. But becauſe ſome might think, there was no Cauſe for ſuch melancholy Apprehenſions, after the ſignal Mercies and Advantages, of which the Goſpel-Covenant had not only given them Poſſeſſion, but had encouraged them to look upon the Preſent, as certain Pledges of more and greater hereafter; to prevent any falſe and dangerous Confidences of this Kind, the next Thing he

he attempts is, to prove, that all ſuch Hopes include a Condition of Obedience; and, that, without this, even the moſt glorious Privileges cannot avail for averting the Wrath of God. In evidence of his Aſſertion, he ſets before them the State of the Jewiſh Church; he ſhews, how highly they were favoured, and yet how unhappily they miſcarried, in the Wilderneſs. And from thence he draws an Inference, that the Chriſtian Church hath Reaſon to expect the like Dealing, if they ſhall render themſelves obnoxious to it, by the like Ingratitude, and diſingenuous Provocations.

This Argument ſeems to turn upon two Points: The Correſpondence between the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Oeconomy; and the Reaſon and Juſtice of the Thing.

The Correſpondence between theſe two Oeconomies is in many reſpects eaſy to be gathered, from what I had long ſince occaſion to ſpeak upon this Subject. But it is no where more ſignificantly declared, than in the Paſſage, and upon the Account, now under Conſideration.

See Epiſt. S. aft. Chriſtmas, *and* 4 *S. In* Lent.

1. To this Purpoſe it is obſervable, *Firſt*, That St. *Paul* applies to the Figure, Expreſſions proper to the Subſtance ſhadowed by it. The *Iſraelites* are called the *Fathers*, as Anceſtors, from whom Chriſtians are deſcended: Of the ſame Race and Stock in a ſpiritual Senſe, and differing in Point of Priority in Time; that is, they and we are one and the ſame Church in the main, though the Periods and Capacities of it be not in all Ages the ſame. Their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and the Paſchal Lamb on that Occaſion, were ſo lively Types of our Reſcue from a Bondage worſe than *Egyptian*, by the Death of Chriſt, as to give him the Title of *Our Paſſover ſacrificed for us*. Their miraculous Paſſage through the Sea, and ſafe Aſcent upon the Shore, while walking under the Covering of a dewy Cloud, by which God declared himſelf in a peculiar Manner preſent; and their Belief and Obedience profeſſed at that Time, by receiving the Commands, and putting themſelves

Chap. v. 7.

themſelves under the Conduct of *Moſes*, are here emphatically ſtyled in the Chriſtian Dialect, being *baptized into Moſes, in the Cloud, and in the Sea.* Ver. 2. The Manna, by which they were ſuſtained in the Wilderneſs, we have our bleſſed Lord's Authority for applying to himſelf, the *true Bread which came down from Heaven.* John vi. And the Rock, pierced to furniſh Water for their Thirſt, St. *Paul* expreſsly calls a Repreſentation of Chriſt. Farther yet, to inſinuate this Alliance and Relation, he calls the one *ſpiritual Meat*, and the other *ſpiritual Drink*; intimating, that they were in the Quality of Sacraments to the Church then in being, and Figures of that other Chriſtian Sacrament, which is the Food of Souls: The Bread, by which we ſpiritually eat Chriſt's Body; and the Cup, in which we ſpiritually drink of this true Rock, out of whoſe Side, when pierced, came forthwith Blood and Water. Such is the Agreement between the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Diſpenſation: But, with this Difference to our Advantage, that the Privileges, which to them were Shadows and Prefigurations of better Things to come, we now enjoy in their Reality and utmoſt Perfection. A real Efficacy and Uſe there was indeed in the Sacraments of the old Law, ſuch as ſuited the Condition and Capacity of the Church at that Time; ſuch as ſignified their Engagements to Duty on one Hand, and the Grace and Favour of God on the Other. But theſe Things were ſo darkly and feebly repreſented then, in Compariſon of the preſent and more plenteous Manifeſtation, both on God's and our Part, in the Chriſtian Oeconomy now, that St. *Paul* here allows them no better a Title, than that of τύποι, rough Draughts, or Sketches, of that finiſhed Piece, which was intended to come after, and to be the laſt and beſt, that a State of Mortality and Trial ſhould ever be bleſt with, or capable of. Ver. 3, 4.

From this Reſemblance, in which it is our Glory to excel, the Apoſtle deſcends to another, which we muſt

muſt make it our conſtant Care to avoid. That of the Crimes, becauſe a certain Conſequence of them will be the Puniſhments, for which thoſe *Iſraelites* were infamous. Of theſe it may not be amiſs to remark ſomewhat briefly; for the more effectual awakening our Dread and Deteſtation of ſome Sins, which ſeem much more nearly allied to thoſe recounted here, than the Generality of Chriſtians ſurely apprehend them to be.

The Provocations given by thoſe *Iſraelites*, are very great and amazing. Eſpecially, when thoſe ſignal Favours they enjoyed, are taken into the Account, for which ſuch Offences were moſt unworthy Returns. Six hundred thouſand Perſons and upwards ſubſiſting upon a daily Miracle, and by a Sort of Food, which, without any Labour or Expence of theirs, fell round about their Camp, and is obſerved to have had the Advantage of accommodating itſelf to every Man's Appetite, did not content them: But they required Fleſh to gratify their Luxury. The Stay of *Moſes* detained in the Mount, ſoon wearied out their Patience; and, though few Months had paſſed, ſince they, in moſt ſolemn and awful Manner, received an expreſs Prohibition to worſhip the inviſible God under any bodily Repreſentation; their blind prepoſterous Zeal formed to themſelves a Beaſt, and ſacrificed to this abſurd Image of their mighty Deliverer. The Allurements of Idolatrous Women prevailed upon their Luſts; and eaſily ſeduced them, firſt to forbidden and polluted Pleaſures, and then to communicating in the Adoration of falſe Gods. The Want of Water, though formerly ſupplied by Miracle, inflamed them into Rage and Rebellion. Nor was their own Experience made uſe of, to quiet their Diſtruſts, or ſilence

Wiſd. xvi. 21.

Ver. 6. Numb. xi.

Ver. 7. Exod. xxxii.

Ver. 8. Numb. xxv.

Ver. 9. Numb. xxi.

the unthankful and loud Complaints againſt that Providence, whoſe Bounty was never more eminently ſignalized, than in the Proviſion lately made, for the Suſtenance and Relief of thoſe inſenſible deſponding Malecontents. Once more, the Report of the promiſed Land, made by the Meſſengers ſent to view it, was ſo diſtant from Truth, the Fears and Sloth of the greater Part of the Reporters ſo mixed with Fact; and the ill Impreſſions thoſe Incendiaries made, ſo greedily received, ſo obſtinately retained; (notwithſtanding the Teſtimony of two Princes of their Tribes, in the Number of the ſent, the many Deſcriptions God himſelf had given to the contrary, and his frequent Promiſes to fix them in that Poſſeſſion) that neither the Truth, nor his Power, had now any Credit with them. Therefore, in Deſpair of a Country believed impregnable, and in Scorn of a Conqueſt not worth the Coſt, in Caſe it ſhould be reduced; they look upon themſelves as given up for a Prey, form a general Mutiny, reproach God and their Governors with the Difficulties of the Attempt, and the Diſcomforts of their preſent ſojourning in the Wilderneſs; renounce the Conduct they had hitherto been under, declare for a new Captain of their own Choice, and prefer even a Return into *Egypt*, before any farther Progreſs toward *Canaan*.

Ver. 10. Numb. xiv.

The mention of theſe Provocations, and of the dreadful Judgments conſequent upon them, were, in a particular Manner, ſeaſonable to the Church of *Corinth*: Among whom St. *Paul*'s two Epiſtles ſufficiently diſcover ſeveral Abuſes and Errors, of great Affinity with the Crimes of thoſe *Iſraelites*. Profane Contempt and public Diſhonour to the Body and Blood of Chriſt, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: Of which true Bread from Heaven, thus diſdainfully uſed, the Manna, treated of

Chap. xi.

old with ſo much Contumely, was in that reſpect alſo a Type. The ſcandalous Liber-
Chap. viii. 10.
ties of partaking in Idol-Feaſts and Temples, were an Approach to the *Iſraelites* eating and drinking before their molten Calf. The Indulgence given to Luſt and Senſuality appears, not only from the Care taken to inſiſt on theſe Vices, and
Chap. v, vi, vii.
the Danger of them, at large; but eſpecially from their conniving at a Crime ſo flagitious and unnatural as open Inceſt *with a Father's Wife*, to
1 Cor. v. 2.
the inſupportable Scandal of Chriſtian Diſcipline and Religion. And laſtly, for the Murmurers of old, who grew weary of God's Methods in the Wilderneſs, deſpaired of *Canaan*, and in Diſcontent at the Hardſhips, they felt or formed to themſelves, were for returning back to *Egypt*; theſe alſo met but too near a Parallel at *Corinth*, in many, whom Dread of Perſecution and Trials affrighted from their Duty. But in none ſo much, as in them, whoſe ſtaggering in the Faith rendered that Diſcourſe, at the 15th Chapter, neceſſary, in proof of Chriſt's Reſurrection and our own. Which two important Articles they who ceaſe to believe, plainly give up that promiſed Inheritance, of which *Canaan* was a Figure; do by neceſſary Implication make God in Chriſt a Liar, revolt from him, and in a ſpiritual Senſe, return back to *Egypt*.

So appoſite were the Inſtances of Diſobedience here, to the Circumſtances of the *Corinthian* Converts at that Time. By which Remark we ſhould flatter ourſelves too much, did we conclude, that they were not alſo *Admonitions* and *Examples*, highly ſeaſonable to the Chriſtians of this, or of any other Place and Time. The Parallel is but too eaſy to be drawn; while there are, even among the Profeſſors of this Religion, ſo many bold Contemners of its Myſteries; ſo many hypocritical and unworthy Receivers of its Sacraments; ſo many Indulgers of thoſe ſenſual Luſts

which

which every baptized Believer hath ſolemnly renounced; ſo many Murmurers againſt the Diſpenſations of Providence; ſo many Hearts entirely ſet upon the preſent World and its Advantages; ſo little Belief in, or Deſire of, or Influence from, the endleſs and unconceivable Bliſs of a Life to come; ſo little ſeeking of this, as their true Happineſs, as that, which ought to be the ultimate Aim of their Actions, the Sum of their Hopes and Wiſhes, and the Support of thoſe Labours and Afflictions, by which their Obedience is tried in this State of Diſcipline. They, who are faulty in theſe Inſtances, though their Crimes be not in Point of Fact the ſame, do yet diſcover themſelves to have the ſame Spirit of Perverſeneſs, and Unbelief, and Diſcontent, with the *Iſraelites* of old. They in effect do ſcorn the promiſed Land, and in their Hearts turn back again to *Egypt*, while God, by Methods ſuitable to his own Wiſdom, is exerciſing their Patience, and leading them to his Reſt, through the Wilderneſs of this World. And therefore every ſuch Chriſtian may ſee his own Danger, in the Events that befel the Perſons, after the Example of whoſe Sins he copies. Which leads me to conſider the laſt Article of the Parallel, conſiſting in the Puniſhments of theſe *Iſraelites*; as we find them recorded in the Sacred Story.

In the *firſt* Inſtance mentioned by St. *Paul*, God gave the Luſters Fleſh according to their Deſire; but withal ſuch a nauſeating and Indigeſtion, that great Numbers are ſaid to have died, not only by a Fire from the Lord, but by a Peſtilence (as ſome) or (as others have thought) violent Vomitings. Inſomuch, that a famous Station in the Wilderneſs received two Names, as Monuments to all Poſterity, intimating the Vengeance God executed, and the Multitudes periſhing in it, upon this Occaſion. In the *Second* Inſtance, the Tribe of *Levi*, conſecrated to the Service of

Numb. xi.

Exod. xxxii.

the Lord, received Commiſſion to make three thouſand Examples for their Deſertion and Apoſtaſy, by ſlaying ſo many, who had ſacrificed to the molten Calf. In the *Third*, the Apoſtle mentions the terrible Effect of a Plague, which ſwept off in one Day three and twenty thouſand; beſides thoſe, whom God ſlew, not by his own immediate Hand, but by Judges and Officers, commanded to be Miniſters of his Juſtice upon the Offenders. In the *Fourth*, the Hiſtory is expreſs, that *much People died* of the venemous Bitings of Serpents. And at the laſt God was ſo highly incenſed, as not only to cut off many of thoſe Murmurers upon the Spot; but unalterably to decree, that two only, of that numerous Body, ſhould attain the Land of Promiſe, while the Carcaſes of the Reſt were left to periſh in the Wilderneſs.

Numb. xxv.

Numb. xxi.

Numb. xiv.

Thus far the Hiſtory of *Moſes* leads us to Examples of God's Severity, even upon his choſen and covenanted People; and ſhews, that Chriſtians cannot, by being ſuch, promiſe themſelves Exemption from the like Judgments, if they ſhall, by the like Diſobedience, render themſelves obnoxious to his angry Juſtice. But the Inference, which, in the Infancy of the Chriſtian Church, St. *Paul* could ground upon Parity of Reaſon, and in Compariſon with the *Jews* only; we, in theſe latter Ages, may ſtrengthen from Matter of Fact; and Events, that have already befallen this Chriſtian Church itſelf. The Parts of it, once moſt conſpicuous and flouriſhing for Soundneſs of Faith, and Piety of Life, have long ſince been over-run with Turciſm and Barbarity. The Light of the Goſpel is taken away from them, and they are once more given up to the blackeſt Darkneſs of Sin and Infidelity. Nor is the Caſe thus with whole Nations only, who have been abandoned by God, after having firſt abandoned themſelves to Wickedneſs; but where the Truth

Truth is ſtill profeſſed, with Private Perſons alſo, whoſe Puniſhments reſemble thoſe of the *Iſraelites*, where their Tranſgreſſions have done ſo. For, how often does the Wiſdom of Providence exert itſelf, in undoing Men by their own fooliſh Choice? How common a Thing is it, for the Senſual and the Worldly to have his inordinate Deſires gratified to his manifeſt Detriment; and thoſe Honours, or Riches, or Pleaſures, which he ſought, as the moſt deſirable Bleſſings of Life, made his Curſe, and his Ruin? How frequently do Diſcontent and Diſtruſt, Wearineſs and Impatience, delay, or utterly put by, thoſe good, and haſten or occaſion thoſe evil Things, which by waiting the Leiſure, and ſubmitting to the Methods of the great Governor of the World, would be ordered infinitely more to our Advantage? But eſpecially (which is the Puniſhment, common to all the Inſtances of Diſobedience recited in this Scripture, and which indeed is the heavieſt of them all) how certain are the vicious Diſpoſitions and Practices, contrary to our Vows and our Duty, to bring us under that common Fate of the rebellious *Iſraelites*, of being excluded the Land of Promiſe: And ſo, whatever be our Portion in the Wilderneſs of this World, to cut off all Acceſs to our heavenly *Canaan?*

In one Word, No Covenant can be more ſolemn and expreſs, than that between God and his ancient People. No Promiſes on his, no Engagements on Man's Part, more firm. The Marks and miraculous Appearances of his Preſence and Favour were then as evident and as glorious; their Privileges and Deliverances were as diſtinguiſhing and valuable, as the Condition of that Church could admit. Yet, all this notwithſtanding, when they ſo foully violated their Part, they did at the ſame Time releaſe God of his. They therefore, from the moſt ſignal Monuments of the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, becoming by their own Perverſeneſs the moſt ſtupendous Monuments of

Wrath and Vengeance, have furniſhed us with abundant Ground, for that Inference at the 12th Verſe, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.*

2. Having ſpoken ſo largely to the Apoſtle's Argument, which turns upon the Correſpondence between the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian Oeconomy; it ſhall ſuffice to ſay ſomething very briefly, to the general Point, wherein both are concerned, the Reaſon, and Juſtice, of ſuch Puniſhments.

The Guilt of any Crime is to be meaſured, not by the Quality of the Fact alone, but by the ſeveral Aggravations attending it: So that the ſame Thing, done by Perſons under different Circumſtances, is very far from involving each of them in the ſame Degree of Guilt. And, not now to deſcend to the particular Conſideration of ſuch Circumſtances, it is evident, the more of Knowledge, and Wilfulneſs, and Ingratitude, appears in the Offender; the more heinous is the Crime, and the heavier Condemnation he is to expect. Now the Law given to the *Iſraelites*, and the Manner of giving it in Mount *Sinai*; the voluntary Engagements, and frequent Declarations of Obedience to it, which themſelves had made; the aſtoniſhing Evidences of God's Preſence and Protection, and the miraculous Effects of his Bounty, under which they daily lived, added to the Cruelty of that Bondage, out of which they had been delivered, and the glorious Miracles attending that Deliverance, before their Arrival in the Wilderneſs; theſe all concur to render all Revolt from, and Diſtruſt of, ſuch a God, wicked and diſingenuous to the laſt Degree. Eſpecially, when the Matter of that Diſtruſt was either real Neceſſities, formerly ſupplied, or imaginary Neceſſities only, or a Deſpair of attaining ſuch Benefits, as his Truth had been pledged for, and as could not be obſtructed by greater Difficulties, than they had already ſeen ſurmounted,

mounted, by paſt Interpoſitions of his Power on their Behalf. Upon all theſe Accounts, the Advantages of their Condition were ſo many Aggravations of their Crime; and the more high their Favour with God had been, the more provoking and unpardonable were the unworthy Returns made for it. The Maxim mentioned by our Saviour, being of ſelf-evident and eternal Equity in Caſes of this Nature; *unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.* Luke xii. 48.

And this is the Conſideration, which brings the Matter home to our own Caſe. For, I hope, there is no need of taking Pains to prove, that the Advantages of the Chriſtian, are in every reſpect far ſuperior to any, that the *Jewiſh* Church could ever boaſt of. The Bondage of Sin and Corruption, and the Miſeries of that Servitude, are infinitely more to be dreaded and deteſted, than all the tyrannical Cruelties of an inhuman *Pharaoh*, and his mercileſs Taſkmaſters. The Reſcue from them was incomparably more glorious and valuable; the Defeat of that barbarous Prince and his Armies and their Deſtruction at the *Red-Sea*, a Bleſſing, far beneath that Overthrow, given to Sin and Death and Satan, by the Blood of Chriſt. The Manna, and Water out of the Rock, though highly beneficial and miraculous, was yet a poor Suſtenance, when compared with *the true Bread, which came down from Heaven, the Fleſh which is Meat indeed, and the Blood which is Drink indeed*; *the Wine of Elect Souls*, and *the Water*, of which *whoſoever drinketh ſhall never thirſt, but it ſhall be in him a Well ſpringing up into everlaſting Life.* And even that Glory of the Lord, which, in a bright Cloud, at once conducted and protected the *Iſraelitiſh* Armies, and delivered his Orders and Oracles from a Tabernacle filled with the Majeſty of the Divine Preſence, had yet no Glory, in Compariſon of that more excellent John vi. John iv. 14.

Coloſſ. ii. 9. Glory of the *Godhead*, *whoſe entire Fulneſs dwelt in Jeſus Chriſt bodily*, pitched his Tabernacle in human Fleſh, and, in the moſt free and familiar Manner, taught and converſed with Men, that he might lead them through this Deſert of a World, to a Region of Reſt and Bliſs. A Region, but poorly repreſented by an earthly *Canaan*, flowing with Milk and Honey; for in this is the Perfection of Joy, and *Rivers of Pleaſure at God's Right Hand for evermore.* Thus are our Deliverances greater and more complete; our Privileges in preſent more noble and ſubſtantial; and our Proſpects in Futurity infinitely more inviting and bliſsful, than any People, or Diſpenſation beſides, were ever bleſſed withal.

And, what ſhould be the Conſequence of theſe Preeminences, but a deeper Senſe of Gratitude, and, in that Senſe, a more punctual, and cheerful, and ſteady Obedience to our merciful Benefactor and Redeemer? Or, if this be not the Conſequence, muſt it not be, that the Heinouſneſs of our Guilt, by behaving ourſelves wickedly and unworthily, will certainly riſe, in Proportion to the Bleſſings we ſlight and abuſe? If God ſpared not the unthankful Wretches, who received leſs; can it in Reaſon be expected, that he ſhould ſpare us, whom he hath obliged to ſerve him by beſtowing ſo much more? We have ſeen the never to be forgotten Inſtances of his *Goodneſs and Severity*; Rom. xi. 22. *to them who periſhed* in the Wilderneſs, *Severity*; but to *us Goodneſs*, exceeding abundant Goodneſs, *provided we continue in his Goodneſs*, *otherwiſe we alſo* ourſelves *ſhall* aſſuredly *be cut off.* Nay we ſhall be made Examples of a Vengeance more inexorable, more inſupportable, if not made wiſer by theſe Examples; becauſe in reſpect of this Admonition alſo, our Advantages have exceeded, and every Degree of that Exceſs is a freſh Aggravation of our Diſingenuity, and adds to the Obſtinacy of our Sin. Let us

then

then labour to understand, that we may rightly value, and be thankful for, the Benefits of the Christian Religion. But let us remember, that this Value, and those Thanks, cannot be otherwise effectually expressed than by a Life of Obedience, worthy the Greatness of those Benefits: And that, as we have been the most eminently favoured, so it becomes and highly concerns us, to be the best and most exemplary, of Men. Let us use and enjoy our Privileges with Delight, but let us use them with Fear too; praising God for them, but not presuming upon them. Let us not sooth ourselves with fond Imaginations, that the Truth and Honour of God are concerned to complete the Happiness of those, for whom he hath done so great Things already. Alas! we know, that, of six hundred thousand who came triumphant out of *Egypt*, two only attained to the Promised Land. He then reserved that Blessing for a new and better Generation; and we are told, that he is able to confound the vain Presumption of them, who *say within themselves, We have* Abraham *to our Father, by even out of Stones raising up Children to* Abraham. God will not, cannot, suffer his Truth to fail, nor his Honour to receive any Blemish; but neither the one nor the other of these is any Comfort or Security to us, farther than we are faithful in the Discharge of those Conditions, to which the Promises are made. And the Glory of God is magnified, not in the Number, but in the Quality and Goodness, of them, who are Partakers (because *made meet to be Partakers) of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Numb. xiv.

Matth. iii. 9.

Col. i. 12.

In a Word, As our Privileges and Mercies, the Spiritual more especially, will make a very considerable Article in the last great Account: so will the Improvement, or the Abuse, of these carry a great Stroke in the Measure of every Man's Reward or Punishment. The Christian for this Reason can expect no *Medium*, between

between the moſt exquiſite Miſery, and the moſt conſummate Happineſs. O that we would therefore conſider the ſad Reverſe, which the Day of God will make, in Multitudes, who now are ſignally favoured, but ſhall then be as ſignally tormented; who now, with Diſdain or with Pity, look upon the Darkneſs and Superſtition of poor benighted Pagans, whoſe *fewer Stripes* for not doing *that Maſter's Will they knew not*, thoſe *who knew, but did it not*, ſhall then have cauſe to envy! O that we would frequently recollect, and ſeriouſly lay to heart, that Judgment denounced by our Bleſſed Lord, when he upbraids the Cities where his Miracles had wrought no Effect! *Wo unto thee*, Chorazin, *wo unto thee*, Bethſaida: *for if the mighty Works which were done in you, had been done in* Tyre *and* Sidon, *they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Aſhes; but I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon *at the Day of Judgment, than for you. And thou* Capernaum, *which art exalted unto Heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in* Sodom, *it would have remained until this Day. But I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for the Land of* Sodom *in the Day of Judgment, than for Thee.* The Words are exceeding appoſite to my preſent Purpoſe; the Application natural and eaſy; fit and profitable to be made, by every particular Church, and every particular Chriſtian. For there we have our Lord's own Authority, declaring by what Meaſures he intends to proceed; and conſequently a freſh and very awakening Enforcement, to that Exhortation of St. *Paul* before us, which God grant every Chriſtian the Grace to practiſe, by conſidering upon how advantageous Ground he *ſtandeth*, and, in proportion to the Height of God's Favour and Mercy to him, *taking* the greater *Heed leſt he fall.*

Luk. xii. 47, 48.

Matthew xi. 21—24.

The

The Ninth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke xvi. 1.

PARAPHRASE.

1. *JESUS said unto his Disciples, There was a certain rich Man which had a Steward; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his Goods.*

1. Jesus thought fit to excite his Hearers to Care and Diligence, in the Use and Improvement of the good Things God intrusts them with, by the following Parable.

2. *And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an Account of thy Stewardship: for thou mayst be no longer Steward.*

3. *Then the Steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my Lord taketh away from me the Stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.*

3. The Steward upon this Warning began to cast about which way he should subsist, when the Profits of his Service were gone; he considered, that hard Labour was a Thing he could not buckle to; and, that Begging was a scandalous Course to get his Bread by.

4. *I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the Stewardship, they may receive me into their Houses.*

4. At last he contrived to ingratiate himself with the Tenants, that they might find their Account in giving him Entertainment, as a Return for past Obligations.

5. *So he called every one of his Lord's Debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my Lord?*

6. *And he said, An hundred Measures of Oil. And he said unto him, Take thy Bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.*

7. *Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred Measures of Wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy Bill, and write fourscore.*

8. *And the Lord commended the unjust Steward because he had done wisely: for the Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of Light.*

8. The very Lord, at whose Expence this fraudulent Project took Effect, could not but acknowledge the Wisdom of the Projector. And indeed the Men of the World are abundantly more shrewd in the Business of it; than even good Men are in the Management of their great and eternal Concern.

9. This Steward's Wiſdom therefore I would have you imitate in ſo managing the periſhing Poſſeſſion of this World, as may ſecure you a future Subſiſtence, when that Truſt ſhall determine.

9. *And I ſay unto you, Make to yourſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting Habitations.*

COMMENT.

THE Parable, now offering itſelf to our Conſideration, ſets before us a Steward, about to be diſmiſſed from that gainful Office, for his improvident Behaviour in it. This melancholy Proſpect puts him upon contriving, how to ſecure himſelf a future Maintenance, at his Maſter's Coſt. The Method, choſen for this Purpoſe, was to deal ſecretly with his Lord's Debtors; and, by making falſe, but favourable Entries, into their Books of Account, to engage their Kindneſs, when he ſhould ſtand moſt in Need of it, as a grateful Return for the Sums thus remitted to them. In this Practice indeed there was great Diſhoneſty, for which Reaſon our Saviour calls him an *unjuſt Steward:* But that Part of his Character not falling within the Compaſs of our Lord's Deſign in propounding this Parable, is paſſed over, without farther Notice taken of it. Mean while his Silence in that Point can by no Means be conſtrued Approbation: But an Inſtruction rather, that, in the Interpretation of Parables, we are to content ourſelves, with drawing ſuch Conſequences from thence, as their Subſtance and main Intent naturally lead us to; without inſiſting too nicely upon Circumſtances, which are incidental only, and beſide the Purpoſe, properly to be ſerved by them. Now that, in the Caſe before us, is manifeſtly to provoke our Imitation of this Man's Wit and Forecaſt: who ſo dextrouſly laid the Scheme for ſubſiſting hereafter, by the Management of a Truſt, which, although a preſent

Ver. 8.

ſent Support, yet he perceived was not likely long to continue ſo. And his great Providence and Application, ſo agreeable to that Earneſtneſs of Thought and Care, which ſticks at nothing, to ſecure the ſo uncertain Advantages of this World, is inſinuated, as a juſt Reproach to the Inconſideration and Remiſsneſs, which even They, who make it their Principle and Profeſſion, to ſecure the everlaſting Advantages of another World, are obſerved to be guilty of, in the Management of that Affair.

The Particulars, ſuggeſted in this Parable, for awakening our Diligence in this great Concern of our Souls and a future State, are principally *Three*.

I. The Capacity of the Perſon, *A Steward to a certain rich Man*, Ver. 1.

II. The Conſideration, which put him upon providing for himſelf, intimated in thoſe Words, *Give an Account of thy Stewardſhip, for thou mayſt be no longer Steward*, Ver. 2.

III. The Method taken for ſecuring his future Subſiſtence; deſcribed at large in the *five* following *Verſes*, and very ſignificantly expreſſed by our Lord, at the *ninth Verſe*; where we find it termed, *Making Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*.

I. The *Firſt* Argument is taken from the Quality of the Perſon, whoſe Behaviour makes the Subject of this Parable. *A Steward to a certain rich Man.* That God ſhould be repreſented under the Character of a *rich Man*, muſt needs be very natural and proper, becauſe *the whole World is his, and all that is therein.* And when we are ſtyled *Stewards* to that rich Man, there are Two Things plainly intended by it; *Firſt*, That whatever Portion of the Things of this World we have in Poſſeſſion, that is not ſtrictly our own; And, *Secondly*, That it is committed to us, in the Nature of a Truſt.

Pſalm l. 12.

1. *Firſt*, The Quality of a *Steward* implies, that the Goods we have at preſent in our Hands, are not ſtrictly

ſtrictly and truly our own. Upon which account it is, that we find the Accuſation in the *firſt Verſe* runs, for waſting that, which was his Maſter's. And a Remark it is, very neceſſary to be often awakened in our Thoughts, that all we enjoy here below, is only lent and permitted to our Uſe; but that ſtill the Property can reſt no where elſe, except in the great Lord, to whoſe Service and Family we belong. We are the Tillers of his Ground, and are allowed to eat, and to rejoice in, the Fruits of our Labour. He gives us leave to take, not only the Neceſſaries, but the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life; He accepts and very well approves of a prudent Care for our Families; He is not diſpleaſed with our eſtimating the Competency of ſuch Proviſion, according to that Rank and Quality in the World, to which, his Providence hath appointed us. But all this while, that Providence hath not appointed you, nor me, nor any Man, Owners and Proprietors in the Caſe. Thoſe Accommodations, which to Day are Ours, will quickly be Another's, and Another's. The Product of the Soil belongs in ſome ſort to Us, but the Soil itſelf belongs to none of Us. And when we have taken the utmoſt Care imaginable, that our *Families may continue, and our dwelling Places endure from one Generation to another*; yet will there be perpetual ſhifting of Hands, and a Succeſſion of freſh Faces, into thoſe *Houſes and Lands*, which we have vainly *called after our own Names*. So that the longeſt Inheritance and Deſcent is in truth no more than the longeſt Uſe; and not ſo much, as a Leaſe or Tenant-right. For, after all our Boaſt of Settlements and Eſtates, nothing is or can be ſettled, but the Fee and Original Right in the great univerſal Lord. And if this can be fixed in Him alone; then it is evident, that all our Poſſeſſions are falſely called Ours. They are ſo far from being Ours as Proprietors, that we have no certain Term in them, but are removeable at the Will of

Pſal. xlix.

the Lord. Nay even the Fruits or Product, which we have ſomewhat more of Intereſt in, are not ſo much ours neither, as that we may diſpoſe of them at Pleaſure. For I obſerved the Character of a Steward to imply, not only, that the Goods in his Hands are none of his own, but likewiſe,

2. *Secondly*, That they are committed to him, in the Nature of a Truſt. *It is required in Stewards, that a Man be found faithful*, ſays St. *Paul*. The Office plainly ſpeaks a Confidence repoſed in them; a Confidence, for which they are accountable; and the Parable now before us declares, that an Account ſhall certainly be taken; and that all thoſe ſhall be charged with, and puniſhed for, their Unfaithfulneſs, who have committed Waſte, and ſquandered away their Lord's Goods unprofitably. This Conſideration ſeems to meet with that fundamental Error, by which Men keep themſelves in Countenance, for the many Miſcarriages of this Kind. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* we find to be a Plea, very frequent, in the Thoughts at leaſt of Thouſands, who believe their Duty ſatisfied in this Regard, when they neither get their Wealth by diſhoneſt Practices, nor ſpend it to the Prejudice of their Family, or their Creditors. But alas! it ſhould be remembered, that this Plea cannot fit any of our Mouths. And, that the Perſon introduced by our Saviour as ſpeaking it, is the Maſter and Owner of the Vineyard. Him thoſe Words well become, in their true and moſt literal Senſe; but they take too much to themſelves, who preſume to uſe them, and are but Labourers and Servants in that Vineyard. Theſe therefore muſt be governed by their Lord, in the Management of the Fruits. For thoſe Fruits are not honeſtly diſpoſed of, when either ſuffered to lie by, without any Uſe at all; or when converted to Ill Uſes, or not employed to ſuch Good ones, as he hath expreſly directed, and declares

1 Cor. iv. 2.

Matt. xx. 15.

declares it his Will and Pleaſure, that they ſhould be expended upon.

It muſt therefore import us very highly, to underſtand aright, what thoſe Goods of our Maſter be, whereof he hath given us the Truſt, and expects to receive an Account. Thoſe ſpecified in the Parable are plainly that *Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*; which is ſo called, partly becauſe it is frequently gotten by Injuſtice and Deceit; and partly becauſe as many as depend and ſet their Hearts upon it, this at the laſt moſt certainly will deceive. Hence, in the following *Verſes* we find it oppoſed to the *true Riches* and termed *Another*'s; to diſtinguiſh it from the Wealth which is truly *our Own*. A plentiful Fortune then is the Truſt intimated here: And the Deſign of our Lord is to make Men ſenſible, that they are not at Liberty to uſe this, juſt as they pleaſe; but bound to conſider it, as ſtill their *Maſter's Goods*, the waſting whereof is an Inſtance of great Unfaithfulneſs, and will be puniſhed as ſuch.

Ver. 11, 12.

But though Wealth be the Goods, to which the Parable is chiefly determined; yet we are not by any Means to imagine, that Rich Men only ſtand in the Capacity of Stewards; or that the Uſe of ſuch Poſſeſſions ſhall be the only Article of our Account. For every Advantage of Nature, or of Grace, as well as thoſe of Fortune, our Life, our Health, our Strength, our Wit and Parts, our Knowledge natural and acquired; our Time, our Leiſure, our every Ability, our every Opportunity, our every Inclination to do well; every Diſpenſation of Providence, whether it be a Change to Honour or Diſhonour, to Abundance or to Poverty, to Eaſe or to Suffering, our very Afflictions, and Temptations; All are our Maſter's Goods, all are entruſted with us; All are capable to be made Profit of; All will at laſt be brought to our Account. And therefore every Man ought to eſteem himſelf a Steward; for though all have not the ſame Truſt, yet all

all have ſome Truſt. A Truſt, in which the greater Circumſpection and Diligence is neceſſary, becauſe it cannot continue always; and becauſe ſo much depends upon the wiſe Management of it, for the Time it does continue. To which Purpoſe I take notice in the

II. *Second* Place, What Conſideration it was, that put this Steward upon ſuch vigorous Endeavours to provide for himſelf. Of this the *Second* and *Third Verſes* are full. And the true Import of them ſeems to be, not only, that this Truſt of ours muſt determine at the Pleaſure of our Maſter, not only, that at ſome Time it certainly will determine; But, that the Loſs of it is a Puniſhment upon us. All which is comprehended in that Paſſage, *How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an Account of thy Stewardſhip, for thou mayſt be no longer Steward*, &c.

That our Poſſeſſions of every Kind lie at the Mercy of our Almighty Maſter; that they muſt determine, whenſoever he ſees fit; and that it is his Will they ſhould ere long determine; are Things ſo manifeſt, even from Experience and common Senſe, that I cannot think there is Occaſion to argue upon ſo clear a Point. Let Men but recollect the ſurpriſing Events, and mighty Changes, in Families and their Fortunes, which fall within the Compaſs of their own Knowledge; and even this narrow View will ſufficiently demonſtrate the Inſtability of our preſent Enjoyments, and the Vanity of eſteeming any Thing, in ſtrict ſpeaking, our own. Now theſe, whether they come upon us by natural Cauſes, or by unuſual Diſaſters; whether Men and their Wickedneſs be the next Inſtruments of them to us; or whether they be more immediately the Handy-work of God; be they the innumerable Chances of Life, or the almoſt as numberleſs Variety of Deaths; yet they muſt be granted to be every Way in reality, ſo many different Methods of taking away our Stewardſhip from Us, or Us from it. Herein

they all agree; as being Inſtances of his Juſtice and Sovereignty. His, whoſe all Things are; who ordains or permits theſe Meaſures, for *diſtributing to every Man ſeverally* as he will; whoſe Right is ſo abſolute, and his Property ſo entire, that he can do no Wrong, however he think fit to *put down One*, and to *ſet up Another*.

Pſal. lxv. 8.

But the Scriptures, when they mention God's Proceedings of this Nature, obſerve, that he acts in the Quality, not of a Lord and Proprietor only, but in that of a Judge too. Which brings us to the Laſt Clauſe of this Conſideration; that, generally ſpeaking, the Loſs of our Stewardſhip is a Puniſhment upon us. Thus Riches are given, to try Men and their Diſpoſitions, and to make them cheerful and thankful Inſtruments of Good to Others, from the Feeling and Imitation of the Divine Bounty to themſelves. But when ſuch Opportunities are neglected, and ſuch Abilities abuſed, God often transfers them into a more worthy Hand; and does, in this Reſpect alſo, *let out his Vineyard unto other Huſbandmen, who will render him the Fruits in their Seaſons.*

Matt. xxi. 41.

Thus *Solomon* obſerves, *A good Man leaveth an Inheritance to his Childrens Children, and the Wealth of the Wicked is laid up for the Juſt.*

Prov. xiii. 32.

And *Job*, much to the ſame Effect, *This is the Portion of a wicked Man with God, and the Heritage of Oppreſſors, which they ſhall receive of the Almighty: Though he heap up Silver as the Duſt, and prepare Raiment as the Clay; He may prepare it, but the Juſt ſhall put it on, and the Innocent ſhall divide the Silver.*

Job xxvii. 13, 16, 17.

Thus does God likewiſe frequently proceed, with regard to thoſe other Goods, of Nature, and of Grace, committed to our Truſt. It is for the Abuſe of Natural Reaſon, that St. *Paul* tells us, God gave the Heathens *up to vile Affections and a reprobate Mind.* It is of Grace, that our Lord denounces

Rom. i. 26, 28.

denounces that Threatning, *From him that hath not*, that makes not a right Uſe of what he hath, *ſhall be taken away even that which he ſeemeth to have.* And once more, it is thus, that, as the Epiſtle for this Day acquaints us, God dealt with the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs; upon whom ſo many Miracles, and ſuch noble Privileges, had been thrown away, without any ſuitable Effects. Now theſe Things ſometimes done, prove that our Advantages of every Kind are Truſts, for which the Receivers ſtand accountable. But in regard, as was obſerved before, every Man, in what Condition or Capacity ſoever, is ſtill a Steward; theſe Changes may be interpreted, not ſo properly a Revocation, as an altering the Nature and Quality, of our Truſt. And therefore one Way more there remains, common to all alike, which is an effectual taking away our Stewardſhip. For Death will be ſure one Day to diſplace us. Death, like the Reſt, is a Puniſhment for Sin: Death too leads us, when thus put out, to a Reckoning, from which none can be exempted; a Reckoning, which He, who is himſelf our Maſter and our Judge, hath peremptorily declared, will turn upon the Manner, in which his Servants have managed their reſpective Talents, delivered out to be trafficked with for their Lord's Uſe. And they, who have not diſcharged their Conſciences upon this Article, ſhall be looked upon as Betrayers of their Truſt; caſt out of their Lord's Favour for imbezelling his Goods, and doomed to everlaſting Puniſhment, for their baſe Ingratitude, and perfidious Injuſtice. So highly does it concern every Man, to attend to, and to copy after the Wiſdom of this Steward; in ſecuring to himſelf a future Subſiſtence, when his Office, and the Profits of it, ſhould be at an End.

Luke viii. 18.

Matt. xxv. Luke xix.

III. This is the *Third* Head I propounded, and the Method choſen for it is deſcribed at large, from the *Third* to the *Eighth Verſe*; and at the *Ninth*, very

ſignificantly expreſſed by *making Friends of the* Mammon *of Unrighteouſneſs.*

This Steward was ſenſible, that his Life was not like to end with his Place; and therefore, if That would maintain him no longer, ſome other Courſe muſt be found, that would. Our Caſe, in this Reſpect, is the ſame with His. Death leaves us nothing farther to manage; but Death itſelf does not make an utter End of us. There is a future and eternal State, to which we are reſerved. This therefore it is our greateſt Prudence always to have our Eye upon; to direct our Aims thither, and to make all we have, and all we do at preſent, turn to Account, for our comfortable Being there.

How this is to be done, the Scriptures abundantly inform us. From hence we learn, that the Knowledge of our Maſter's Will is the moſt indiſpenſable Obligation to do it; that this is the Thing, we are principally concerned to know: That Faith without Works is but a dead Carcaſe, and the Belief, not of Chriſtians, but of Devils. So that Good Parts, and Wit, and Learning, and Study, are to be employed in promoting Virtue, and Religion, and Truth; in Practices, and Examples, and Perſuaſions proportionable to the Meaſure of theſe Advantages. To ſpend them in nice and unprofitable Speculations, is to waſte our Maſter's Goods: But to miſapply them, in the Recommendation of Profaneneſs, or Falſhood, or Irreligion, or any Manner of Vice, is to turn his own Gifts againſt him. Which whoſoever does, is threatened with everlaſting Torments. Whereas they, who uſe them faithfully in his Service, are promiſed to *enter into the Joy of their Lord*, nay, for their Wiſdom to *ſhine as the Firmament*, and *for turning many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

Luke xii. 47. Phil. iii. 8. James ii.

Matth. xxv. Dan. xii.

Concerning the Aſſiſtances of Grace, how often are we

we called upon, to *work together with God*, to be exceeding careful, that *we receive it not in vain*, to *minister the Gift one to another as good Stewards?* How often warned of the Greatness and the Justice of their Condemnation who quench it, who resist it, who turn it into Lasciviousness? How often commanded to employ it, to the Glory of God, to the Advancement of his Truth, to the Order and Peace and Edification of his Church, to the Spiritual Benefit of our Brethren, and the general Good of Mankind? How solemnly assured, in case we do so, that the same Spirit, who now makes us Partakers of the Grace, will not fail hereafter to make us Partakers of the Glory, of Christ?

2 Cor. vi. 1 Pet. iv. Heb. x. 29. Jude 14. Rom. xii. 1 Cor. xii. Rom. viii.

The Time will not suffer me to be particular in the Uses directed to be made, of the several other Goods of our Master, which I took notice under the First Head, are committed to our Charge. Let it suffice to say in general, that of each of them an Account must be rendred; and, that this can be done with Comfort for none of them, which are not diligently managed, to the Discharge of our own respective Duties; to the answering those Relations and Capacities, wherein Providence hath placed us; and in a Word, to the becoming useful and beneficial to the World, as we have Opportunity and Power to glorify God, and to do Good to Mankind.

But it is fit I should be, because the Parable is, express in the Case of Riches. These, when distributed to others, is in this Case no Wrong, but the very Design of that Master, whose Goods they are. He hath forbidden us to heap them up unprofitably, and declared, that the *rest of them shall be a Witness against* them that do so. He hath also forbidden them to be used, as Instruments of *making Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof*. Vanity and Pomp, Luxury

Jam. v. 3. Rom. xiii. 14.

and Exceſs are all Waſte; and the Wealth, thus conſumed, doth even worſe than periſh in the uſing. But the Sums expended in Works of Piety and Public Good, of Charity and Compaſſion, are laid out well and wiſely. Theſe are moſt truly ſaid to *make us Friends*; for they engage the Thanks and the Prayers of the Poor; they attract the Favour and Love of Mankind in general; and, which is beſt of all, they enſure to us the Friendſhip of God and of Chriſt. Of Him, who interprets our Kindneſs to the leaſt of his Brethren, as done to himſelf; and who declares, that for feeding the Hungry, clothing the Naked, and other fit Expreſſions of Mercy to the Diſtreſſed, the Righteous ſhall enter into Life Eternal.

Matt. xxv.

O let us then conſider our Character, and the Account to be given of it: That our Stewardſhip can be but ſhort; and therefore, that no Time ſhould be loſt in getting the beſt Security we can, for an Habitation which may laſt for ever. Let us be wiſe and generous at the ſame Time, by turning that Wealth, which is one of our moſt dangerous Temptations, into an Occaſion of the moſt profitable Virtue. Let us adore the Wiſdom of our gracious Lord, who thus inſtructs us, how to improve the periſhing Droſs of this World, into a *Crown that fadeth not away for ever in the Heavens*. Let us adore that Goodneſs, which ſo amply rewards a ſmall Return of his own Gifts: And *ſhew Mercy with Cheerfulneſs*, ſince ſure to be accepted, when employing his Riches to our own true Intereſt. In a Word, Let us always remember, that we are Stewards; and manage every Gift entruſted with us, as Men that muſt give an Account. So ſhall we provide effectually againſt our Diſmiſſion from this Service; and, when we fail, as ſhortly fail we muſt; ſhall be ſure to find *Friends*, ready and glad to *receive us into everlaſting Habitations*. Which God of his Mercy grant we may, for Jeſus Chriſt his Sake.

1 Pet. v. 4.

Rom. xii. 8.

The Tenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

LET thy merciful Ears, O Lord, be open to the Prayers of thy humble Servants; and that they may obtain their Petitions, make them to aſk ſuch Things as ſhall pleaſe thee, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.* 1 *John* v. 14.

The EPISTLE.

1 Cor. xii. 1.

1. *CONcerning ſpiritual Gifts, Brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Perſons endued with them, and the proper Uſe and Exerciſe of theſe Gifts, are Matters of great Concern to be rightly informed about.

2. *Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto theſe dumb Idols, even as ye were led.*

2. Theſe are Advantages, of which the Religion you have now embraced, when compared with the Idolatry you have left, ſhould give you a very high Eſteem.

3. *Wherefore I give you to underſtand, that no Man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jeſus accurſed: and that no Man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.*

3. See Comment.

4. *Now there are Diverſities of Gifts, but the ſame Spirit.*

4. Now theſe ſo different Gifts flow all from the ſame Source. The Spirit of God is the Beſtower of them.

5. *And there are Differences of Adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord.*

5. The Offices, that call for the Exerciſe of them, are all appointed by the ſame Lord and Chriſt.

6. *And there are Diverſities of Operation, but it is the ſame God, which worketh all in all.*

6. The Works performed by them are Inſtances of the Power of the ſame God.

7. *But the Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal.*

7. And all theſe Powers and the Exerciſe of them are deſigned for the Good of the Church in general.

8. Hence it is, that these Gifts are ſorted as we ſee in the Diſtribution, enabling one to underſtand deep Myſteries, another to reveal the Meaning of ancient Prophecies, *&c.*

8. *For to one is given by the Spirit, the Word of Wiſdom; to another, the Word of Knowledge, by the ſame Spirit;*

9. Another to be firmly aſſured, that God will aſſiſt him in the moſt difficult Operations for the Service of the Church: another to cure Diſeaſes;

9. *To another Faith by the ſame Spirit; to another the Gifts of Healing by the ſame Spirit;*

10. Another to exert the Divine Power in inflicting Vengeance, as St. *Peter* upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira*; or in raiſing from the Dead, as he did *Tabitha:* Another to foretel future Events; another to diſcern between true and falſe Prophets; another to ſpeak Languages he never learnt; another to explain them to the People, when ſpoken by ſome other.

Acts v. Acts ix.

10. *To another the working of Miracles; to another Prophecy; to another diſcerning of Spirits; to another divers Kinds of Tongues; to another the Interpretation of Tongues.*

11. Thus does the ſame Divine Spirit produce all theſe miraculous Powers; but in ſuch Meaſures and Kinds, and to ſuch Perſons, as himſelf, who is the ſole and unreſtrained Diſpenſer of them, ſees fit and beneficial.

11. *But all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf ſame Spirit, dividing to every Man ſeverally as he will.*

COMMENT.

SUCH is the Perverſeneſs of Human Nature in its preſent corrupt State, that the Helps and Advantages, afforded for Correction and Improvement, are often turned by us into Occaſions of Sin. Of this the Church of *Corinth* laboured under a famous Inſtance, with regard to the extraordinary Gifts and Operations of the Holy Spirit. The Intent whereof was, to eſtabliſh the Truth, to convince Unbelievers, to promote the Increaſe, and Edification, and Unity, of the Church of Chriſt, by ſuch mutual Aſſiſtances and Services, as each, in his Way and Meaſure, was qualified to contribute, for the Benefit of the Whole. But theſe were abuſed by ſome, to the Prejudice of that Doctrine

Doctrine they were meant to confirm; by Others, to Oſtentation, Vain-glory, and private Reſpects; to invidious Compariſons between the different Kinds of theſe Gifts; and between thoſe who partook of the ſame Kind, to Contempt of them who were endued with leſs, and envying of them, who were diſtinguiſhed by larger Meaſures. Theſe are the Abuſes, which the Apoſtle here ſets himſelf to reform; and the wiſe Method choſen for that Purpoſe, is in effect as follows.

Firſt, He puts them in mind of the Vanity and Superſtition of that falſe Religion, to which they had formerly yielded a blind Obedience. The Object of their Worſhip then was ſenſeleſs and dumb Idols; ſuch as were falſely pretended to give out their dark Oracles, but were in Truth altogether incapable, either of uttering any themſelves, or of dictating any to others. Whereas now they had embraced the Doctrine of a God indeed. One, who had not only taught the Truth himſelf; but had enabled his Servants to reveal and propagate it, in a Manner ſo aſtoniſhing, and with Evidences ſo unconteſtable, as nothing leſs than immediate Inſpiration, and Powers altogether Supernatural, could poſſibly account for. A Religion, which will be the Reſult of Conſideration and Reaſon; and not, like that forſaken at their Converſion, the Effect of Ignorance, and Prejudice, and the early imbibed Errors of an unhappy Education. This I conceive to be the Apoſtle's Meaning in thoſe Words, *Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away to thoſe dumb Idols, even as ye were led.* Ver. 2.

2. But, in regard the Communications of God's Spirit were the diſtinguiſhing Character of the Teachers they ought to follow; his *Second* Care is, to fortify them againſt the Seducements of ſome, who boaſted that they were, but were not in reality, acted by this Spirit. Such were Ver. 3.

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the *Jewiſh* Exorciſts in particular. For Detection of whoſe Falſhood he gives one general Rule, of uſe againſt them, and all Impoſtors whatſoever. 'Tis that, of obſerving their Doctrines, with regard to our Bleſſed Saviour's own Perſon and Authority. If any ſpoke in Derogation of him; inſinuating, that he was a Deceiver, and, as ſuch, to be ſhunned and abhorred; even ſuppoſing that Preacher to work Wonders, yet were they to be looked upon as lying Wonders, and not Operations of the Holy Ghoſt. The Reaſon is, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt was given on purpoſe to atteſt the Truth, and win Men over to the Belief, of *Jeſus*, and his Authority. He cannot therefore be ſuppoſed to act in ſuch manifeſt Contradiction to his own Deſign, as the imparting a Power of working Miracles, in Diminution of, nay in direct Oppoſition to, the Dignity and Doctrine of *Jeſus*, muſt argue him to do.

On the other Hand, If any Perſon made it his Buſineſs to inculcate the Truth, as it is in *Jeſus*; if he taught Men to believe, to obey, to ſerve, and ſubmit to him, and entirely to depend upon him for their Salvation; whatever Miracles ſhould be wrought in Confirmation of ſuch a one's Authority, theſe, they might be aſſured, were wrought by God's own Spirit: And the Preacher working them might be ſafely adhered to. The Reaſon is, Becauſe a Confirmation of ſuch Principles as theſe, was every Way agreeable to the End and Purpoſe of imparting that Spirit, and his Powers. But, though we ſhould admit a Power, yet can we not ſuppoſe an Inclination, in any evil Spirits, to lend ſuch an Aſſiſtance as this, to the promoting a Perſuaſion, ſo deſtructive of their own Intereſts and Deſigns, as that of the Goſpel, and Advancement of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom is manifeſtly known to be.

3. Next he proceeds upon that, to which the two former Particulars were a Sort of Introduction: The Cauſe, the End, and the different Sorts of Spiritual

ritual Gifts. All of great Weight, in the Deſign he was driving on: As is evident, from the Uſe made of them in the following Part of the Chapter, and as may eaſily be diſcerned, by the Portion of it now before us.

1. For *Firſt*, He inſiſts that, how different ſoever the Abilities, or the Manner of exerciſing them, or the Stations in which they were exerciſed, might be; yet ſtill this was common to them all, that they were Gifts, and that they were given by the ſame Hand. Nor does he, upon this Occaſion, content himſelf with affirming in general Terms, that God is the Author of them; but diverſifies his Expreſſion in ſuch Manner as may be reaſonably thought done, with Deſign to intimate the Perſonality and Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt, the Trinity of Perſons in Unity of the Godhead, and the Joint-acting, and equal Concern of Father, Son, and Spirit, in Matters of this Nature. An Operation, common to all *Three Perſons*; however the Scriptures, in Condeſcenſion to our Capacities, do ſometimes (as here in Particular) appropriate ſome Actions and Effects to one or other Perſon in the Deity, in more ſpecial Manner, or more frequently, than to the Reſt. This Argument indeed runs through the whole Epiſtle for the Day, but is chiefly contained, in the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 11th Verſes.

2. *Secondly*, He obſerves to them the End, for which ſuch Gifts are beſtowed. They muſt not be ſuffered to lie idle, but are expected to exert themſelves vigorouſly. For which Reaſon St. *Paul* ſeems to uſe a Term of great Emphaſis, when ſtyling them the *Manifeſtation of the Spirit*. Nor muſt they be employed in Matters of little or no Conſequence and Account; for they are *given to profit withal*. Nor muſt this *Profit* be confined to the Perſon's own ſelf, for he who diſtributes them hath much larger Views. He intends them for the Benefit of the whole Body myſtical; to which St. *Paul* urges

Ver. 7.

urges the Duty of contributing, by comparing it with the Body natural. Nor laſtly, may we patronize our Sloth, or our Sullenneſs, by a Pretence of Incapacity to do the Public Service: For, beſides that the meaneſt Members have their neceſſary Uſes, this *Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*; which had been Laviſhneſs, not Liberality, if every Man were not, by the Help and induſtrious Uſe of it, in a Condition of becoming profitable; and conſequently, to account for the Aſſiſtances that make him ſo.

3. *Laſtly*, St. *Paul* mentions a great Diverſity of Gifts; from the 8th to the 11th Verſe: And this ſo, as plainly implies two Things. The Firſt is, that in this Diſtribution every one ſpoken of had ſome, but none had all. The Second, that the Sorts, and the Meaſures, and the Perſons, were ſo choſen and ſuited, as made moſt for the common Benefit. This we may reaſonably enough infer, from the *Spirit*, (the Spirit of Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Order) being ſaid to *work* them *all*, and to *divide them ſeverally as he will*: Who, we ought to preſume, as he beſt knows, ſo he never fails to chooſe, the fitteſt Inſtruments. But if we carry our Eye forward, to the Arguments couched in the Apoſtle's Allegory of the Body natural, no queſtion can be made, but it was intended we ſhould ſo underſtand him.

It muſt be ſure allowed on all Hands, that the Gifts in this Diſcourſe are thoſe miraculous ones, which though neceſſary in the firſt Ages of the Church, have long ſince been withdrawn, upon that Neceſſity ceaſing. But I ought not to omit, that there are alſo Aſſiſtances and Gifts, of Uſe and Continuance in all Ages of Chriſtianity, to which the Force of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning extends itſelf. Theſe likewiſe are the Gifts of God; theſe are given to be exerciſed for promoting his Glory, and the Good of Mankind; and theſe are ſo diſtributed, that every Man may be in

in ſome, though none in all, Reſpects ſerviceable; but all have their particular Stations and Endowments, in which, if rightly choſen, and diligently improved, they are fitted to diſcharge their Duty, by bringing Honour to God, and Benefit to the World.

It is alſo preſumed by ſome, that St. *Paul* here, as well as at the End of the Chapter, ſpeaks of Gifts imparted to, and exerciſed by, thoſe that are frequently diſtinguiſhed under the Title of *Spiritual Perſons*; Such as bore ſome Office in the Church, or adminiſtered in Holy Things. The Occaſions, and in Proportion the Supplies, of theſe Perſons, no doubt, were greater than thoſe of common Men. And ſome of the Gifts ſpecified in this Paſſage, ſeem in a more peculiar Manner accommodated to their Character. But here again I cannot but apprehend it of Importance, for every Chriſtian, in what Capacity ſoever, to think himſelf concerned. And this, without all Controverſy, is the Intent of our excellent Church, when propounding this Scripture, in the yearly Epiſtle for this Day, to the pious Meditation of all her Children. 'Tis, that they might be reminded, whence their good Gifts come; awakened to a conſcientious Improvement of them; thankful for, and contented with, what they have received; Humble and Modeſt in their Opinion of themſelves; Diligent in the Buſineſs of their particular Callings; Uſeful and Profitable to the Body in general; Tender and Reſpectful to their Brethren; Compaſſionate to their Failings, Liberal and Kind to their Wants, and Glad of their Advantages. For theſe are the good Qualities, which this Epiſtle aims at promoting. The Obligations to them, and the Reaſonableneſs of them, are deduced from hence, in the following Part of the Chapter; and ſhould have been explained and enforced by me at this Time, had not the Reader found both largely done upon the Epiſtles of *Firſt* and *Second* Sundays after the *Epiphany*.

The Tenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE. *St.* Luke xix. 41.

41. *AND when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it.*

42. Expreſſing himſelf (as People in Concern are apt to do, when they ſee all Hopes of Amendment paſt) to this Purpoſe: O! well had it been for thee, if thou wouldſt have laid hold on the precious Opportunities afforded thee for thy Preſervation: But thoſe are now at an End, and the Puniſhment of thy Obſtinacy is reſolved upon.

42. *Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy Day, the Things which belong unto thy Peace: But now they are hid from thy Eyes.*

43. *For the Days ſhall come upon thee, that thine Enemies ſhall caſt a Trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every Side,*

44. *And ſhall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one Stone upon another: Becauſe thou knoweſt not the Time of thy Viſitation.*

45, 46. See Paraphraſe on *Matt.* xxi. 12, 13. *Goſp. for* Advent-Sunday.

45. *And he went into the Temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold therein, and them that bought,*

46. *Saying unto them, It is written, My Houſe is the Houſe of Prayer: But ye have made it a Den of Thieves.*

47. *And he taught daily in the Temple.*

COMMENT.

THE Evangeliſt had juſt before deſcribed our Bleſſed Saviour's triumphant Paſſage to *Jeruſalem*. The Reſpects paid him in his Way, and the general Joy and Acclamations at his Entrance into the City, have been conſidered upon another Occaſion. The Divine Mixture of Compaſſion and Zeal, then expreſſed by himſelf, is the Subject of this Day's Goſpel.

Goſpel. The *Former* was ſeen, in thoſe Tears of Pity drawn from his Eyes, and in the tender Lamentations of that Ruin, and all the diſmal Circumſtances of it, which he here moſt punctually foretels, as a Puniſhment now determined, for avenging the *Jews* obſtinate Infidelity and affected Blindneſs. The *Latter* appears, in his Reſentment of the Profanations committed upon the *Temple*, in driving out thoſe that ſold and bought there, and reproaching them with that Injuſtice and Extortion, which turned that *Houſe* into a *Den of Thieves:* Though they could not but be ſenſible, that God had aſſerted a peculiar Property in it, and deſigned it purely for the Uſes of Piety and Devotion.

Ver. 41, 42, 43, 44.

Ver. 45, 46.

The Former of theſe Heads would furniſh proper Matter, for conſidering that Diſpenſation of the Divine Diſpleaſure, whereby the *Day* of a wicked Perſon or People, that is, the Time of God's Grace or Forbearance toward ſuch, is ſhortened or brought to a full Period: The Evidence we have, that this ſometimes is done, and the Juſtice of doing it; the Nature of thoſe Offences that provoke it; the Marks, whereby a probable Judgment may be made, when the Caſe is brought to this paſs; and the deplorable Miſery of its being ſo. Theſe are all Topics of great Uſe and Moment, which I muſt at preſent be ſatisfied with hinting at, becauſe I am, by a former Promiſe, confined to the other Part of this Goſpel. The Intent whereof is plainly to correct, or prevent, the Profanation and Abuſe of Places ſet apart for Divine Worſhip. The Ground whereof being plainly laid in thoſe Words of the Prophet, which called the Temple *God's Houſe*, and *the Houſe of Prayer*; my Method in treating this Argument ſhall be, *Firſt*, to conſider the Caſe of the *Jews*, and their Temple at *Jeruſalem*; *Secondly*, That of the Chriſtian Temples deſigned for the like Uſes; and *Laſtly*, By

See Goſp. Adv. Sunday.

one or two Inferences, very briefly to adviſe ſuch Behaviour in them, as may be moſt comely for the Place, and profitable for ourſelves.

1. As to the *Jews* and their Temple, (Firſt of all) None who have been at all converſant in the Writings of the *Old Teſtament*, can be ignorant, what Reverence was conſtantly paid, to the Tabernacle firſt, and the Temple afterwards. Nor were thoſe extraordinary Regards any Part of the vain Superſtition, to which that People were ſo exceedingly prone; but abundantly warranted, and even required, by the Honours and Titles given it by God himſelf. Accordingly we find it ſtyled *the Tent which God had pitched among Men, his Sanctuary*, his *Dwelling*, his *Courts* and *Palace*, his *Holy Mountain*, his *Preſence*, the *Place which he had choſen out of all the Earth to ſet his Name there*. Add to this, that the Apoſtle, under the *New Teſtament*, declares it to have been the *Figure of the Heavens*, and of that glorious Seat *not made with Hands*, where the glorious Majeſty of God more peculiarly reſides. All which was ſhadowed by the *Ark of the Covenant*, by the *Mercy-Seat*, by the *Cherubim* and *Glory*. Nay and (which is the laſt and higheſt Pre-eminence due to it) this was alſo the Type of God united to Man, in the Perſon of our Bleſſed Saviour, and ſo dwelling *within the Veil*; that is, (as the inſpired Author to the *Hebrews* interprets it) *the Fleſh* of *Chriſt's* Human Body.

Pſal. lxxviii. 60—69. lxxxiv. 1—10. Iſa. lvi. 7. 2 Chron. xx. 9. Deut. xvi. 16.

Heb. ix.

Heb. x. 20.

Hither the moſt diſtant *Iſraelites* were commanded upon ſolemn Occaſions to repair: Here to offer Devotions and Sacrifices, for the acknowledging of paſt, and imploring future, Mercies: The Prayers poured out here were ſuppoſed, of all others, to find quickeſt Acceſs and kindeſt Acceptance. Which Perſuaſion

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is the Cauſe of ſo many doleful Complaints, for being debarred the Privilege of attending at that Throne, where God took ſpecial Delight to hear and help. Thus *David*'s Affectionate Lamentations expreſs his Baniſhment from the Marks of God's peculiar Preſence and Favour exhibited here, to be the Circumſtance of Suffering, which, of all others, ſate heavieſt upon his Spirits; and he intreats more earneſtly to be reſtored to the public Aſſemblies for God's Worſhip, than to his Dignity and Crown. The like pious Tenderneſs we find in the Captive *Jews* at *Babylon*; who were more ſenſibly afflicted, by the demoliſhing of their Temple, than by all the Ravage and Deſolation, brought upon the reſt of their City and Country. The Favour afterwards found with Heathen Princes, was chiefly improved by obtaining leave to rebuild the Houſe of their God; and, upon ſuch leave given, the holy Men among them were more zealous in promoting that Work, than any other, either private, or public, Reparations. Theſe are but ſome out of many Arguments; but *Theſe*, I think, are ſufficient to ſhew, how the Caſe ſtood with the *Jews* and their Temple; how juſtly it was named *God's Houſe*, and *the Houſe of Prayer*. Let us now obſerve, in the

See Pſal. xlii. xliii. lxiii. lxxiv.

See Daniel ix. *and the Books of* Ezra *and* Nehemiah.

II. *Second* Place, Whether the ſame Appellations do not properly belong to thoſe Places alſo, which are ſet apart and now uſed by Chriſtians, for their public Worſhip of Almighty God. That theſe alſo are Houſes of Prayer, is evident from the original Deſign and conſtant Uſe of them. We do not indeed pretend, that any one of ours is, like the *Jewiſh* Temple, the only Place in which God hath fixed his Name and Dwelling: for we hope his Name, and his Preſence of Favour, is in every one of them. And we endeavour to invite, and to continue it there, by ſetting them apart to his Service; by doing this with devout Prayers, by ſolemn

Donations; by appropriating them to Religious Uſes, and excluding from them all others. Theſe were the Titles, (ſtrictly ſpeaking) which ſecured his Property in that at *Jeruſalem:* And therefore ſuffer me to improve this Occaſion, by ſaying ſomewhat very briefly concerning the Fitneſs, and the Piety, of Building, Conſecrating, and Adorning of Churches.

1. *Firſt*, We ſhall diſcover good Reaſon for approving and commending the Piety of building Churches, if we at all attend to the Neceſſity of it, in order to the Exerciſe of Religion. That God is to be worſhipped in public, as well as in private; that, the more ſolemn, more general, more unanimous, our Acknowledgements of him are; the more becoming our Duty, the more for his Honour they are; is, I think, the Voice of Nature and Reaſon, heard and confirmed by the univerſal Conſent of Mankind. Now Divine Worſhip, like all other Actions of finite Creatures, muſt be determined to ſome particular Place. Private and Public both agree thus far. But then here lies the Difference; that, for his Private Service, though ſome Places may be more, and others leſs, commodious; yet none is unlawful, or utterly unfit. He, we are told, is *about our Path, and about our Bed*, in our Parlours and our Cloſets, in our Gardens and our Fields. And it were well, if he were in all our Thoughts too; and addreſſed to (as he might be without Offence) in any, or in all of theſe Places; and commonly, the more retired and ſolitary ſuch Addreſſes are, the better they are. But Public Devotions cannot be thus performed. They aſk a convenient Reception for Numbers that may reſort to them. A Reception, which it is every one's Duty to deſire, and every one's Right to partake of. And, becauſe the Correſpondence we are allowed to hold with Almighty God, is of a Nature ſo diſtant from the Affairs and Incumbrances of this

Pſal. cxxxix.

World; therefore the general Practice of Mankind hath been, not only to have Places for this Purpose, but Places severed, and manifestly distinguished, from common Dwellings. Why may we not suppose the Heathens of old, in erecting their Altars about Mountains and Groves, and other Places of Privacy and Retirement, were governed partly by a natural Instinct, insinuating, that the Business of Religion is best promoted, when we retreat from Noise, and leave the World and its Cares behind us; and, that God, who is the Father and Giver of all, ought to have somewhat among us, which may, in a peculiar Manner, be called his own?

2. This brings me to speak, *Secondly*, of Consecrating our Churches. The Manner whereof, in short, is, (after such Donations by the Builder or Benefactors, as may be a Fund for securing their Reparations, and prevent their returning to common Uses any more) to deliver them over to the Bishop (who in this, as in some other Rites, acts as God's Representative) for the sole Service and Property of the *Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls*. He, having thus received them in *Christ*'s Stead, does, by an authentic Act, separate them accordingly, and then, by proper Prayers implore God's Favour and Acceptance, and his Readiness to hear the Prayers, and prosper the good Instructions, and confirm and bless with a saving Efficacy the Holy Sacraments, which shall at any Time be there presented to, and administred before Him.

The former Part of this Solemnity hath been by some thought unnecessary, upon the Suggestion, that the very assembling of People together for public Business, renders the Place, in which they assemble, public: And, if those Assemblies be upon Religious Accounts, this is presumed to make the place Holy too. But each of these is plainly a Mistake. For it is not the Matter transacted in it, but the Right and Title to it, that makes any Place public or private.

If a Corporation (for Inſtance) ſhall meet and diſpatch any Affairs, relating to that Society, in their Chief Magiſtrate's Dwelling-Houſe, this does not make his Houſe to become their Common-Hall. But the Difference ſtill remains in Point of Property; of the one to a private Owner, of the Other to the whole Body. Now that, which makes any Thing public, is giving the Public a Title to it; and that, which denominates Things of this Nature Holy, is ſeparating them from Vulgar, and appropriating them to Sacred, Uſes. The mere ſerving one's ſelf of ſuch Things in the Miniſtration of holy Offices, is not ſufficient, except it be alſo ſurrendered up to God, ourſelves diveſted of all Perſonal Right, and He put into full Poſſeſſion. When this is done, to alienate or take it back is Robbery and Sacrilege: But till then, the Houſe is no more God's, than our Cloſets where we ſay our Prayers, or the Cups, in which ſick Perſons communicate at Home. So reaſonable, ſo neceſſary it is, that the Houſes built and intended for the Service of God ſhould have an End thus put to all private Claims and Pretenſions.

The latter Part of this Solemnity, conſiſting of Prayers and Interceſſions, Scripture hath given us expreſs Authority for. Particularly in that Dedication of *Solomon*'s Temple, which received ſignal Teſtimonies of God's Approbation. And conſidering, how bold Men are apt to make, and with what undaunted Avarice they ſometimes prey upon, a diſtant and inviſible Avenger; ſomewhat of Form is neceſſary, to reſtrain that Inſolence. For which nothing can be more proper, than thoſe Impreſſions, which ſuch an authoritative and devout Separation is naturally fitted to make, upon Minds not perfectly obdurate.

1 Kings viii.

3. Laſtly, for the Adorning of our Churches; if any (here with us in particular) ſhall blame the Expence of it; I cannot (to ſpeak my Mind freely) but wiſh, there

there were yet more Ground miniſtred for that Objection, than generally there ſeems to be. For ſure a Decency, in this Regard, is conformable to every Man's Senſe, who profeſſes to retain any Reverence for God and Religion. The Magnificence of the firſt *Jewiſh* Temple is ſufficiently known, and the ſevere Reproofs for too ſparing Contributions to the Second. Far from us be all Ornaments, miſbecoming the Worſhip of a Spirit, or the Gravity of a Church. But ſure it hath a very ill Aſpect, for Men to be contentedly and ſordidly Frugal, and to think that well enough in God's Houſe, which they would not endure even in the meaneſt Offices of their own. Religion ſhould not be dreſſed in the Habit of a Wanton, but do not deny her that of a Matron. Let her be modeſt in her Garb, but withal comely and clean; and allow her enough, not only to protect her from Shame and Contempt, but to draw ſome Reſpect too. If ſome have injured her by a falſe and too artificial Beauty; this is no Reaſon, why we ſhould think it a Virtue, to turn pious Clowns and Slovens, by running into the contrary Extreme, and *worſhipping the Lord* in the Dirt and Deformity of Holineſs. St. *Paul*, diſputing againſt Prayers and Prophecy in an unknown Tongue, bids his *Corinthians* imagine a Stranger, coming into ſuch a Congregation; and then to judge of their own Practice, by the Sentence, which, their own Reaſon muſt needs tell them, ſuch a one will naturally paſs upon it. And if we in like manner appeal to the common Senſe of Mankind; no more would be needful, to evince the Fitneſs of Liberality and Largeneſs of Heart in the Service of God, whom we profeſs, and are bound to revere, and honour, and love to the Uttermoſt: And, that neglecting to provide Things decent and honourable for it, muſt needs provoke others, at once to deſpiſe our pretended Piety, and to

1 Kings vii.

Hag. i. ii.

1 Cor. xiv.

abhor the Service of the Lord. *Offer this to thy Governor* (ſays the Prophet) *will He accept thy Perſon or be pleaſed with it?* And, though God do not value our Splendor or our Pomp, yet (as he goes on there) *if we offer the Blind or the Lame for Sacrifice, is it not Evil?* That is, if Men think nothing too good for their own Uſe, and nothing too bad for His; they may call him *Maſter* and *Father*, but theſe Notions and Proceedings plainly prove, that he is not the Object either of their *Honour*, or of their *Fear*.

Mal. i. 6, 8.

By this Time, I hope it ſufficiently appears, that God hath an equal Right to every Chriſtian, as he had to the one *Jewiſh*, Temple. The rather, becauſe the original Deſign of thoſe Words, *My Houſe is the Houſe of Prayer*, was to foretel the Enlargement of *Chriſt*'s Church, and the new State of Affairs under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation. This is evident, from that remarkable Addition in *Iſaiah*, *My Houſe ſhall be called the Houſe of Prayer for all People*. Whereby the bringing in of the Gentiles to the Faith is expreſsly foretold. And if the Caſe ſtands thus, then ſurely we are obliged to conſider, in the

Ver. 46.

Iſai. lvi. 7.

III. *Third* and laſt Place, What Reſpect is due to theſe Houſes, and how Men are expected to behave themſelves there. To which Purpoſe I ſhall mention two Particulars, the one regarding the Church, as it is the *Houſe of God*; the other, as it is the *Houſe of Prayer*.

1. *Firſt*, Theſe Houſes, conſidered as God's, oblige us to demean ourſelves in them, as under God's more immediate Preſence and Obſervation. His Preſence and his Eyes, no doubt, are every where; but yet we are taught to believe, that he manifeſts himſelf in ſome Places, after a more eſpecial Manner than in others. Of this one Token among the *Jews* was thought

thought to be the Miniſtry of Angels; and thoſe inviſible Spirits have been commonly believed to attend continually upon the public Worſhip of God; to obſerve, and aſſiſt, and invigorate, and protect, and maintain an Intercourſe between, pious Congregations upon Earth, and the Throne of Grace in Heaven. This many Interpreters have preſumed to be St. *Paul*'s Senſe of the Matter; when preſcribing Rules of Decency in Places of this Nature, *becauſe of the Angels*. But, be that as it will, we attribute to theſe Places no Holineſs inherent and eſſential, but ſuch as is relative only; and due for the Sake of their Owner and Inhabitant. And therefore all Aſperſions, that charge ſuch Reſpect with Idolatry or Superſtition, proceed either from great Ignorance, or great Perverſeneſs. 1 Cor. xi. 10.

2. *Secondly*, As theſe are *Houſes of Prayer*, let me entreat, that every Man would be careful effectually to make them ſuch to himſelf. That the Offices, I mean, performed there, may be frequented conſcientiouſly, and joined in devoutly. The Benefits of public Prayer are many and great. And our Petitions, when with united Force aſcending to Heaven, bid much fairer for Acceptance and Succeſs, than any the moſt vehement Importunities of a ſingle and ſolitary Devotion. Particularly the unanimous and uniform Prayers of the Church expreſs the Unity of our Faith, our mutual Charity, our joint Relation to *Chriſt* the myſtical Head of this Body. In this regard, Prayer and Sacraments have an Advantage above Reading, or Hearing, or any other Religious Duties. And probably this may be one main Reaſon, why God's Houſe is called the *Houſe of Prayer*. For Preaching and Expounding are indeed Inſtructions in our Duty, ſent from God for our Good; but we may be inſtructed by pious Advice, and uſeful Books at Home. We may likewiſe pray alone; but we cannot do the one or the other alone, ſo as ſhall teſtify to the

World our Communion with *Chriſt*, and with one another; like the ſame Things, done in the public Aſſemblies of Chriſtians. Hence every one ſhould make a Conſcience of improving every Opportunity for ſuch Prayers: becauſe every one is obliged to acknowledge that ſpiritual Society, the being a Member whereof does (ordinarily ſpeaking) put him in a Capacity of Salvation.

But to come is a ſmall Thing, unleſs we join too; join with our Hearts, with our Mouths, with our whole Bodies. The Miniſter pronounces the Petitions in the Peoples Name and Behalf; but, do not ſuppoſe, that He will be heard for any, who neglect to pray for themſelves. Every one therefore ſhould repeat the Confeſſions, to acknowledge his own Sin and Vileneſs; and the Creeds, to declare and confirm his own Faith; and the Lord's Prayer, to call God Father with his own Mouth. The Hearts of the People ſhould go ſilently, and reverently, along with him, in all the other Parts of the Service, and confirm every Collect for themſelves, by expreſſing the earneſt Deſires of their Souls, in a diſtinct and hearty *Amen*. As oft as he ſays, *Let us pray*; they ſhould recollect their wandering Thoughts, rouſe their heavy Hearts, and double their Vehemence and Zeal. And, throughout all the Litanies and Anſwers, they ſhould be very diligent to do their Part; eſteeming it (as in Truth it is) a ſingular Privilege, that the Lay-Members of the Church of *England* have a greater Share allotted to them in her Offices, than thoſe of any other Perſuaſion I ever heard of. And yet it is obſervable, that, in other Reformed Churches, the Care to qualify themſelves for joining is greater, and the Peoples Neglect of joining upon theſe Occaſions much more unuſual and ſcandalous. This is in Truth a Duty, from which nothing but Ignorance can excuſe. And that might ſoon be remedied, and ought to be ſo, by the early Principles of a Religious Education, as ſoon as poſſibly it can.

They,

They, whoſe Unhappineſs it is to have wanted this, muſt be the more careful to ſupply that Defect, by reverent Geſtures, Compoſure of Mind, and diligent Attention. This I may take upon me to affirm; that if our Public Prayers be defective, it muſt be, on the Part of thoſe that uſe them. For the Church hath taken admirable Care of her Part: And, by the prudent Conſtitution of a moſt excellent Liturgy, gives us great Hopes of obtaining the Mercy, which we are directed to beg in the Collect for this Day. Namely, that, being thus taught to *aſk ſuch Things as pleaſe God, his merciful Ears will be open*, (and may they ever be open) *to the Prayers of* Us *his humble Servants, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

The Eleventh SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O God, who declareſt thy Almighty Power moſt chiefly in ſhewing Mercy and Pity: Mercifully grant unto us ſuch a Meaſure of thy Grace, that we running the Way of thy Commandments may obtain thy gracious Promiſes, and be made Partakers of thy heavenly Treaſure, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

1 Cor. xv. 1.

PARAPHRASE.

1. *BRethren, I declare unto you the Goſpel which I preached unto you, which alſo ye have received, and wherein ye ſtand;*

1. As to the Point of the Reſurrection from the Dead, (the calling which into queſtion is another Abuſe now prevailing among you) I muſt put you in mind, what ye were taught concerning it, at your firſt Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith.

2. *By which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unleſs ye have believed in vain.*

2. That Faith, by which ye are entitled to Salvation; if ye retain and perſevere in it, and have not fallen back again, and condemned your firſt Aſſent, as raſh and over-credulous.

3, 4. Now the Foundation, on which that Faith was built, I laid in the Death of Chriſt, the End and Purpoſe of that Death and the Certainty of his Reſurrection; all of them exactly agreeable to the Prophecies relating to this Matter, and confirmed by unqueſtionable Evidence.

3. *For I delivered unto you firſt of all, that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our Sins according to the Scriptures:*
4. *And that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third Day according to the Scriptures:*

5. For he was ſeen after his Reſurrection by *Simon Peter*, (Luke xxiv. 34.) by the whole College of Apoſtles, (*Luke* xxiv. 36, &c. *John* xx. 19, &c. 26, &c.)

5. *And that he was ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve.*

6. Afterwards by a very great Number of Believers in *Galilee*, according to his own Promiſe and Appointment, (*Matt.* xxvi. 32. xxviii. 10. *Mark* xiv. 28.) moſt of whom are ſtill alive to teſtify the Truth of it; but ſome of them are dead.

6. *After that, he was ſeen of above five hundred Brethren at once: of whom the greater Part remain unto this preſent, but ſome are fallen aſleep.*

7. He was alſo ſeen of *James*, the Brother of our Lord and firſt Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*. He viſibly aſcended into Heaven in the Preſence of all the Apoſtles. (*Luke* xxiv. 50, 51. *Mark* xvi. 19. *Acts* i. 4, 9, 10—12.)

7. *After that he was ſeen of James; then of all the Apoſtles.*

8. And after that Aſcent he appeared to me (*Acts* ix. xxii. xxvi.) as to one not mature for earlier Diſcoveries, and, like an abortive Birth, below the juſt Dimenſions of an Apoſtle.

8. *And laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo, as of one born out of due Time.*

9. For I am not worthy that Title and Character, becauſe formerly a Perſecutor of Him and his Truth.

9. *For I am the leaſt of the Apoſtles, that am not meet to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe I perſecuted the Church of God.*

10. But the exceeding Goodneſs of God hath made me what I now am. And that Mercy I have endeavoured to ſhew myſelf ſenſible of, by an indefatigable Labour and Zeal in his Service. The Glory whereof is ſtill in no Degree due to me, but to that Grace of God entirely, which gave me both the Heart and the Ability, to do what I have done for the Propagation of his Goſpel.

10. *But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and his Grace which was beſtowed upon me was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*

11. *Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.*

11. In which I have religiously kept to the Pattern set me by the other Apostles. All of us agreeing in the same Doctrine so punctually; that, by what Hand soever it is received, yet in the Principles inculcated by your Preachers, and embraced by our Hearers, there is not the least Difference.

COMMENT.

IT hath been formerly observed, that one of the Corruptions in the Church of *Corinth*, which St. *Paul* by this Epistle endeavoured to reform, was the Disbelief of the Resurrection and a future State. Upon that Subject he treats in this *Fifteenth* Chapter; and the first Step taken towards the Proof of it, is by establishing the Certainty of our Lord's Resurrection. This Doctrine he afterwards makes Use of, not only as an Evidence of the raising our Bodies being a Thing possible in it self; but as a Pledge of our Resurrection to follow hereafter, by virtue of the Conquest over Death exemplified in His already past. This Argument is handled at large in the following Parts of his Discourse; but that Part now in Hand may be reduced to Two Heads. *Epist. 9 Sund. after* Trin.

Ver. 1, 2.

The former consists in the Assertion of our Lord's dying and rising from the Dead, as a necessary Article of the Christian Faith; as a Point exactly agreeable to the Prophecies of the *Old Testament* concerning the *Messiah*; and, as a Fact supported by a Multitude of Testimonies, of undoubted Veracity and Credit. The latter is incidental, and a Digression concerning himself. Wherein this Apostle hath left us an Example of these following Virtues.

Ver. 3, 4.

Ver. 5—8.

1. Of Humility, and a mean Opinion of our own Performances, even when highly useful and commendable; in allowing to others their just Praises and Deserts, and being so far from any vain-glorious Emulation, or detracting

detracting from their Worth, as to practiſe that Modeſty and *Lowlineſs of Mind* elſewhere preſcribed, of *eſteeming others better than ourſelves.* *I am the leaſt of the Apoſtles*, &c.

Phil. ii. 3.

Ver. 9.

2. A frequent Recollection even of thoſe Faults, from which it is our Happineſs to be perfectly reclaimed. For though God, in the Greatneſs of his Mercy, vouchſafe to blot out and forget theſe; yet it is highly neceſſary for us, to keep them in remembrance. This is an admirable Expedient for preventing all ill Effects of that Spiritual Pride, ſo apt to get Ground upon Men eminently good; for awakening our Caution and juſt Fears of Relapſe, by modeſt Remembrances what we have been, and humble Apprehenſions what we may be again, and for preſerving, by theſe Means, a thankful Senſe of the Change made in us. *I am not meet to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe I perſecuted the Church of God.*

Ver. 9.

3. A very extraordinary Diligence and Zeal, to make Reparation by the following Part of our Lives, for any Omiſſions, Neglects, or notorious Crimes, whereby our Conſciences have been wounded, or the Cauſe and Credit of Truth and Religion may have ſuffered heretofore. *I laboured more abundantly than they all.*

Ver. 10.

4. Even when this Change and Reparation ſhall be made, arrogating no Merit or Glory to ourſelves; but aſcribing the whole to God's Goodneſs, and the Operations of his bleſſed Spirit. *By the Grace of God I am what I am.* And again, *Yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* The firſt general Topic hath been ſufficiently ſpoken to, upon the Goſpels for *Eaſter* Day and the Two Days following. The Example, ſet us in the latter, will more properly find an Enlargement, in my Diſcourſes upon the Day ſet apart by the Church, for commemorating this bleſſed Apoſtle's Converſion.

The Eleventh SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke xviii. 9.

9. *JEſus ſpake this Parable to certain who truſted in themſelves, that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.*

PARAPHRASE.

9. To the former Parable encouraging our Fervency and Perſeverance in Prayer, Jeſus added the following one, to mortify the Vanity of them, who are highly conceited of their own Sanctity, and think meanly of their Brethren. Of both which Faults the Phariſees were generally guilty.

10. *Two Men went up into the Temple to pray: the one a Phariſee, and the other a Publican.*

11. *The Phariſee ſtood, and prayed thus with himſelf, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.*

12. *I faſt twice in the Week, I give Tithes of all that I poſſeſs.*

12. I obſerve the Law in its utmoſt Vigour, nay I even go beyond it; keeping two Faſts a Week, for which I have only Tradition; and tything even Mint, Anniſe, and Cummin, (See *Matt.* xxiii. 23.) which whether they be titheable or not is Matter of Diſpute.

13. *And the Publican, ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as his Eyes to Heaven, but ſmote upon his Breaſt, ſaying, God, be merciful to me a Sinner.*

13. The Publican, by keeping at a Diſtance, by dejected Looks, and every Geſture that could ſignify a Senſe of his own Unworthineſs, and deep Remorſe, did in a few Words and moſt humble Manner, implore Pardon for his many and great Offences.

14. *I tell you, This Man went down to his Houſe juſtified rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.*

14. And this Man God pardoned and approved, rather than that proud uncharitable Phariſee. And ſo he always does prefer the lowly and ſelf-condemned, before the haughty and ſelf conceited Man.

COMMENT.

THE Temptations, that beſet us, are ſo thick and ſtrong; that, were there nothing to threaten our Ruin, but merely the known Tranſgreſſions of God's Law, our utmoſt Care were neceſſary, our conſtant Fears were juſt. Of this no Doubt can remain, Whether we conſider the Enemy's Force who attacks us, or our own Weakneſs, and want of Reſolution to encounter him. But, when our very Virtues are made Inſtruments of undoing us, this gives a freſh and more awakening View of our Danger; and of a Foe, whoſe Stratagems will not fail to meet us, even when we think ourſelves at the greateſt Diſtance from them. And ſuch is the Unhappineſs of our Caſe. The ſubtle Adverſary of Souls finds Ways to convert our very Zeal for Religion to his own malicious Purpoſes; and if we be not upon our Guard, makes us yet more the Children of Hell, by taking Advantage of thoſe very Satisfactions, which are meant to ſupport and invigorate us in the Love and Purſuit of Heaven.

The Goſpel indeed propounds the comfortable Teſtimonies of our Conſcience, as a very powerful Encouragement to Holineſs of Life. But alas! thoſe Comforts are exceeding apt to degenerate into Confidences, and to blow us up with high Conceits of our own Sufficiency. The Wickedneſs of others, which ſhould be ſeen with Pity, we hardly forbear inſulting over ſecretly; are apt to deſpiſe the Men, as well as deteſt the Crimes, to take falſe Meaſures of ourſelves from them, and judge our own Proportions, by diſdainful and wicked Compariſons. A Method, the more hazardous and fatally deceitful, becauſe always founded upon either ſome real, or ſome ſuppoſed,

poſed, Perfections. And yet this puts us farther off from Safety, than the Sins of thoſe guilty Wretches we ſo much contemn. For a very profligate and ſcandalous Converſation, when reflected upon with a truly ſorrowful and ſelf-reproaching Mind, does, it ſeems, miniſter more Hope, and procure a more favourable Acceſs to the Throne of Grace, than any the moſt raviſhing Contemplations of our own imagined Excellencies are able to do.

This Truth our Lord deſigning to illuſtrate, does here, by way of Parable, deſcribe a Phariſee and a Publican together in the Temple. The End of their repairing thither was the ſame; for they Both *went up to pray*. Ver. 10. But in this their Behaviour was very different, and their Succeſs no leſs ſo. The Phariſee, approaching with great Boldneſs, and highly contented with himſelf, triumphs in his Innocence of ſuch groſs Crimes, as others too commonly abandoned themſelves to; and in ſome punctual Obſervances, to which all did not hold themſelves obliged. The Publican, full of Remorſe and Confuſion, only laments his Vileneſs, and humbly implores Mercy. Yet ſee the ſurpriſing Iſſue. That gay inſulting Man was particularly careful to diſtinguiſh himſelf from his poor dejected Companion: He very ſolemnly gave God Thanks, that he was not *as this Publican*; and he was not as this Publican indeed. For our Saviour hath ſhewed us the Difference between them in thoſe Words; *I tell you, this Man went down to his Houſe juſtified rather than the other*. Ver. 14.

This Paſſage is no doubt a good Inſtruction, with what Diſpoſition of Mind it is fit we approach Almighty God. It proves, that Lowlineſs, and Modeſty, and Conſciouſneſs of our own Guilt and Miſery, are proper Qualifications to recommend our Prayers. But it ſeems to have a ſtill more general View; that of diſcountenancing ſpiritual Pride, and a Contempt of

other

other People. For the *Ninth Verſe* takes expreſs Notice, of its being directed to Perſons, *who truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.* Such it intends to mortify, by declaring that even the vileſt Sinners, when vile in their own Sight, are preferred by God, before the haughty ſelf-conceited Righteous. The Equity of which Proceeding, though our Lord's ſingle Authority might ſuffice to perſuade us of it, yet we may do well to conſider, and ſatisfy ourſelves in ſome Reaſons for it, under the *Three* following Heads.

I. *Firſt*, The Character of the Parties concerned here.

II. *Secondly*, The Difference of their reſpective Diſpoſitions.

III. *Thirdly*, The Reaſons, which render the one ſo much leſs, the other ſo much more, agreeable to Almighty God.

I. I begin with the Character of the Two Parties concerned in this Parable, the one a *Phariſee*, the other a *Publican*. *Phariſee* is a Title, importing Separation. Not that this Sect of Men were Separatiſts from the eſtabliſhed Religion of their Country; but becauſe they ſet to themſelves ſtricter Rules of Living, and affected a Diſtinction from the Vulgar, by higher Degrees of Sanctity, and ſome particular Obſervances, which the *Jews* in general did not look upon themſelves bound to. Hence came their Gloſſes on the Ritual Law of *Moſes*, which ſtrained its Precepts to their utmoſt Rigour. Hence many Traditions entirely new, and held in equal Authority with, though ſometimes no better than Corruptions of, the Written Word; hence their exceeding Niceneſs in waſhing of Pots, and Veſſels, and Tables; their formal Purifications after coming from Places of public Concourſe; their ſupercilious declining of promiſcuous Conver-

Matth. xv.

Mark vii.

Converſation; their frequent Reproaches of our Bleſſed Saviour, for eating in mixt Company, and with unwaſhen Hands. Hence, laſtly, St. *Paul* alledges before *Agrippa*, that he formerly *lived after the moſt ſtraiteſt Sect* of the Jews *Religion*, *a Phariſee*: and hence, as he tells the *Galatians*, he became an extraordinary Proficient in that Religion, and *more exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of his Fathers*.

Matth. ix. Luke vii, xv. Mark ii, vii.

Acts xxvi. 5.

Gal. i. 14.

The Publicans, on the other Hand, were properly thoſe Officers, whom the *Roman* Governors employed, as Collectors of their Cuſtoms. And theſe, while Servants of the State, demeaned themſelves more honourably, and lived in good Credit enough. But, in Proceſs of Time, when thoſe Duties were farmed, and came into private Hands; they gave themſelves over to all manner of mercileſs Oppreſſion, and ſeemed to be loſt to all Senſe of Juſtice and common Modeſty. How infamous the Men of this Profeſſion were in our Saviour's Time, we need no other Proof, than the Scripture itſelf. Which, by joining together Publicans and Sinners, Publicans and Harlots, Publicans and Heathens, ſhews with what Company they were thought to be moſt ſuitably ranked. As a Phariſee then denotes a ſcrupulous and moſt preciſe Jew, who profeſſes to make the greateſt Conſcience of his Duty; ſo a Publican is but another Name, for a Wretch, that never troubles himſelf with Duty or Conſcience at all; one that ſticks at nothing that is baſe and ſcandalous, but is an open, profligate, ſhameleſs Knave.

The more amazing muſt it needs be, that a Wretch ſo abominable ſhould find Grace, and one, who thought he needed no Mercy, ſhould fall ſhort of it. And, in regard God is no partial Judge, but weighs every Man's Prayers and Perſon in an even and juſt

Balance; ſomewhat of Moment there muſt have been, which made ſo ſtrange a Difference between them. Now what this was, I am about to explain, ſo far as this Parable will guide us into the Diſpoſitions of theſe Men reſpectively; which make the Subject of my *Second* Head.

II. The Phariſee's Temper is ſufficiently diſcovered by the Form of his Prayer: *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are; Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.* The Stile is inſolent and boaſting; that of a Herald, rather than a Suppliant. For even the Thanks he would ſeem to give, ſpeak Sufficiency and Self-Satisfaction; and do not ſo much render God his Praiſes, as they proclaim his own. Pride therefore is his firſt remarkable Blemiſh; and that the very worſt Sort, ſpiritual Pride, and ſuch a Security, as we find ſtiled at the Ninth Verſe, *A truſting in himſelf that he was Righteous.* Ver. 11.

But, admitting ſo lofty an Opinion of his own Excellencies to be never ſo juſt; yet what Neceſſity was there, what Warrant or Privilege could he have, to diſparage and vilify his Brethren? Was there no Way to bleſs God for being good himſelf, but by repreſenting every Body elſe to be ſtark naught? *I am not as other Men are.* What could be more fulſome Vanity, than thus to ſet himſelf off, as an Exception to a whole World at once? *Or even as this Publican?* To break that bruiſed Reed, and, with ſcornful Reproaches, to fall foul on a wounded Soul, whoſe Sins, and whoſe penitent Sorrow much more, called for the Compaſſion and Comfort of every Stander-by. So that the *Second* Charge againſt this Phariſee and his Prayer, was, that he *deſpiſed others.* Ver. 9.

The Publican, quite contrary, in all his Expreſſions, in all his Deportment, ſpeaks nothing but Shame and Confuſion, the tendereſt Contrition, and moſt profound

found Humility. He *ſtands afar off*, as not preſuming upon a nearer Approach to the Preſence of ſo Holy a Majeſty. He *lifts not up ſo much as his Eyes to Heaven*, but by the Guilt and Melancholy of his Countenance, takes to himſelf the ignominious Titles, ſo liberally beſtowed by his ſcornful Companion. He *ſmites his Breaſt*, as conſcious of the Pollutions lodged there; looks not abroad, but confines his Thoughts to his own Miſery; alledges nothing in his own Behalf, no Mixture of Good, to balance or mitigate the Evil of his paſt Life; feels no Comfort, ſeeks no Refuge, except in the Mercy of a forgiving God; brings no Motive to incline that Mercy, but a ſorrowful Senſe of his own Unworthineſs, and an humble Hope in God's unbounded Goodneſs. And therefore upon this, this ſaving, this only ſupporting Attribute he caſts himſelf entirely, with a *God be merciful to me a Sinner*. Ver. 13.

Such are the Perſons, repreſented to us by the foregoing Parable. A Phariſee, burſting full of Pride, and Cenſoriouſneſs, and Diſdain: And a Publican, as deſpicable, and meek, and low, as Guilt, and Sorrow, and Humility could lay him. And yet the Event is, that *This Man who humbled himſelf was exalted, and That who exalted himſelf was abaſed.* Nor is it thus in a ſingle Inſtance only, but our Lord draws it into a general Concluſion, and declares it ſhall always be thus: That ſuch Preference is agreeable to Juſtice and Equity, and to thoſe Rules and Meaſures, upon which God conſtantly proceeds. The Reaſonableneſs whereof that we may be in ſome convenient Degree able to comprehend, I deſign, under my *Third* and Laſt Head, to ſhew, how deſervedly the Former of theſe Perſons found a leſs favourable Reception than the Latter. In order whereunto, it will be neceſſary to obſerve the Nature, *Firſt*, of that vicious Diſpoſition manifeſt in the Pha- Ver. 14.

riſee; *Secondly*, That of the Righteouſneſs he ſo vainly truſted in; and, *Thirdly*, How the Publican differed from him in Both.

1. The Diſpoſition blameable in this Phariſee is Pride: And in Conſequence of that, uncharitable Cenſoriouſneſs, and Contempt of his Brethren. Than which there are not, in all the black Catalogue of Vices, any more deſervedly hateful to God, more injurious to Men, or more prejudicial to our own ſelves.

It was Pride, that firſt brought Rebellion and Strife into Heaven, and caſt down the Apoſtate Angels thence, who affected to be Equal, or Superior, to their God and Creator. 'Tis Pride, that inſpires Obſtinacy, and Contempt of the ſame Divine Majeſty, in every preſumptuous Offender, who quenches his Spirit, caſts his Word behind him, and tramples his Laws underfoot. Nor is this the Seed of all malicious Wickedneſs only, but it poiſons and blaſts our Righteouſneſs itſelf; ſtains all the Beauty, and loſes all the Reward, of it. For every proud Man robs God of the Honour due to his Providence and his Grace, erects new Altars to ſtrange Deities, and, by the wildeſt of all Idolatry, burns Incenſe to himſelf. So boldly does he entrench upon, ſo highly does he provoke the Jealouſy of him who ſolemnly declares, that *he will not give his Glory to another*, nor part with his Praiſe to any ſuppoſed Excellencies; which in Effect are ſo many Images, that our diſtempered Fancies firſt form and grave to themſelves, and then fall down and worſhip them.

Iſai. xlii. 8.

Upon our Neighbour Pride is an inſupportable Encroachment. For it renders Men haughty and aſſuming in their Carriage, peeviſh and perverſe in their Humour, troubleſome and contentious in Buſineſs, cavilling and captious in Converſation, jealous of Affronts that were never intended, and full of Reſent-

ments

ments for Injuries that were never done; inſenſible of the Misfortunes that happen to their Brethren, ſevere upon their Infirmities, and implacable for their Faults. Upon theſe, and upon many other Accounts, the proud Man renders himſelf a common Enemy: For he lives at Defiance with all Mankind, and puts them upon their Guard, to defend thoſe Rights and Privileges and Reſpects which he ſo arbitrarily endeavours to tear from them, and eſteems the placing upon any other, to be a Loſs and Robbery to himſelf.

But moſt eſpecially is this Vice deſtructive to a Man's own Soul. For it taints all our Principles, and purſues wrong Ends; it covers our lurking Faults, and draws a Veil before our Weakneſſes and Wants; prevents all Repentance, and proves a certain Bar to all Improvement. It ſhuts the Door againſt Admonition and Reproof, forbids the Advice of Friends, and ſilences the Checks of Conſcience. To one, ſo full of himſelf, as to ſee no need of Amendment, nor any Perfection to which, in Imagination, he hath not already attained, all Diſcipline and Kindneſs muſt needs be loſt: all Reaſonings of his own Mind muſt needs be ineffectual. For every Thing there is ſeen, through a falſe Light, and falſe Glaſſes. The moſt ſlender Appearances of Virtue are brought nearer and magnified, the moſt deformed Blemiſhes are thrown off at a vaſt Diſtance, and leſſened to the Eye. Deluſion only reigns, and Truth is never received, till ſome awakening Diſpenſation does at laſt, perhaps too late, diſcover the Man to himſelf.

But that's not all. For, as the proud Man is impatient to be uppermoſt, ſo he cloſes with the baſeſt Methods for being ſo, and raiſes himſelf upon the Ruins and Rubbiſh of all that ſtand in his way. This is the Man, who, above all others, is pragmatical and curious, factious and froward, inquiſitive that he may find Faults, inſulting when he hath found them; and,

where none can be found, induſtrious to make them. Envy, and Spight, and Calumny are his Character; every Man's Parts, and Power and Wealth, and Reputation, are a Plague and Grief to him; all the Light he ſhines by is borrowed and comparative; Detraction and Defamation ſupply the Place of true intrinſic Worth; and therefore every other Name muſt be blackened, to add Luſtre to his own. So dangerous, ſo monſtrous a Creature, is a proud Man. But eſpecially, a proud ſupercilious Phariſee, that exalts himſelf with rapturous Reflections upon his own Piety and Preciſeneſs; and triumphs in not being *as other Men are*, but much more pure, more perfect than they, for all other Men indeed to Him are *even as this Publican.*

But, my Brethren, (as was once ſaid to *Samuel*) *Look not on* this Man's *Countenance, nor on the Height of his Stature, becauſe God hath refuſed him*; *for the Lord ſeeth not as Man ſeeth, for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart.* He is not impoſed upon by Form and Shew, but draws off the Maſk from a diſſembling Phariſee; carries his Eye to the Bottom of the whited Sepulchre, and treats him according to the Rottenneſs and dead Bones within. He, through the melancholy Guiſe of a dejected Publican, beholds and values Humility and true Contrition, which are Virtues in the Sight of God of great Price. And, tho' theſe do not ſparkle or caſt ſo glaring a Light; yet have they more of the real Warmth and Spirit of Religion, than all the dazling Beauties of that counterfeit Face of Godlineſs, with which the Phariſee takes ſo much Pains to dreſs himſelf out. Had the Virtues he arrogated to himſelf, been never ſo ſubſtantial and commendable; yet his intemperate Over-rating them, and his uncharitable Cenſoriouſneſs, had been an Alloy ſufficient to debaſe them. But his, after all, were not Standard. There is indeed a Gliſtering, but no ſuch intrinſic Value in them,

1 Sam. xvi. 7.

them, as he fondly imagined; as I am now about to make appear, by conſidering

2. *Secondly*, The Nature of that Righteouſneſs he ſo vainly truſted in.

Now here we ſhall do well to obſerve,

(1.) That the Foundation of thoſe Excellencies he ſuppoſed in himſelf, lies chiefly in Compariſons; *I am not as other Men are, I am not as this Publican.* A moſt deceitful Way of arguing, but yet too commonly indulged: By which Men are betrayed, in taking falſe Meaſures of themſelves, and ſpeaking ſuch Comforts to their own Conſciences, as no Way belong to them. For what Advantage can another's Faults bring to us? 'Tis certain, each Man's Actions are the proper Iſſue he ſhall be judged upon; thoſe of our Brethren cannot be conſidered in the Account. And, for a Man to be eſteemed righteous here, or to depend upon being happy hereafter, becauſe ſome others are more wicked now, or ſhall be more miſerable then; is not leſs abſurd, than it were for one Bankrupt to boaſt of his Wealth, becauſe another is gone off for a larger Sum; or, for a Perſon actually in Sickneſs and Pain, to fancy he hath perfect Eaſe and Health, becauſe his Neighbour's Paroxyſms and Torments are more frequent and acute than his own.

(2.) The Offences this Phariſee diſavows are *Adulteries, Extortion, Injuſtice*; ſuch in a Word, as very profligate People are ſuppoſed to abandon themſelves to: And the ſtanding clear of theſe is no doubt a Bleſſing, of which every Man ought to have a very thankful Senſe. For we are all by Nature frail, and capable even of the moſt horrible Enormities. But yet the Virtue requiſite for commending us to God, muſt be a great deal more than this comes to. Theſe Sins indeed expoſe us to Shame and Reproach; but Conſcience, not Reputation, is the Principle we are to proceed upon. And they, who do ſo, will be equally ſcrupulous of tranſgreſſing in

leſs heinous, leſs ſcandalous, Inſtances. For thoſe alſo muſt be reckoned for with God, though they do not alike draw upon us the Cenſure and Condemnation of Men. Adultery and Extortion, 'tis true, are grievous Crimes: But 'tis as true, that Pride, and uncharitable Judging, and inſolent deſpiſing of our Brethren, are ſo too. And do not our Saviour's Rebukes to the Phariſees teach us, what Sort of People thoſe are, who profeſs the utmoſt Abhorrence of the former, and yet make the latter their daily Practice, without any Remorſe at all? Is not this to court the Name more than the Subſtance of Religion; to *ſtrain at a Gnat* when Men look on, and yet make no Bones of a *Camel*, when none are privy to the ſwallowing it, but God and themſelves? And I conceive, we do this Phariſee no Wrong, in ſaying, that the plain *Engliſh* of what he thanks God for here is in Effect but thus much; That he was clear; not of all, but of the groſſeſt and moſt infamous Vices; had lived more cautiouſly than many others; and been hitherto ſucceſsful in deceiving the World with a Pretence and Pomp of Godlineſs, without the true Power of it. For ſuch was

Matt. xxiii. 24.

3. *Thirdly*, The frequent Faſtings and exact Tithings, in which he expreſſed ſo great Satisfaction. Acts of Piety, both which carry an Appearance of extraordinary Devotion, and Severity, and ſome Neglects of Intereſt and Pleaſure, which others thought they might very innocently forbear. Such as would give Men a Character of Virtue above the common Size, and diſpoſe the Vulgar to beſtow ſuch diſtinguiſhing Titles, as the *Punctual Tither*, the *Conſtant Faſter*, and the like; but, when weighed in the Balance, theſe too will be found wanting, and that, in the following Regards particularly:

1. *Firſt*, Theſe Acts of Piety have much leſs of Difficulty in them, than the attaining to any tolerable Advancement in ſolid and ſubſtantial Virtue. Praying

ing and Faſting often commit no very great Violence upon Nature; but it is one Thing, to abſtain from a Meal, and another, to ſubdue a corrupt Appetite, or reduce an exorbitant Paſſion. For we ſee the Phariſee now before us, who impoſed this Penance upon himſelf twice every Week, was yet very far from having humbled his Soul with that Faſting, and mortifying, either the vain Conceit of his own Merit, or his contemptuous Diſdain of other People.

2. *Secondly*, Such Acts and Exerciſes, as they have leſs Difficulty, ſo have they leſs, they have indeed nothing of, Worth or Efficacy, without ſubſtantial and Moral Virtue. For it may be of Moment to obſerve, that ſome Things in Religion are of intrinſic Goodneſs, and enjoined for their own Sakes; whereas others are commanded for the ſake of, and in order to, farther and better Ends. Thus Faſting, and Praying, and Reading, and Hearing, and the like, are not ſo much Parts of true Godlineſs themſelves, as Helps and Furtherances toward Godlineſs. We faſt, and pray, and read, and hear, to the Intent we may be fitted for Practice. But, if our Paſſions be not ſubdued, Faſting is Formality; if our Lives be not amended, Hearing is in vain; if our good Deeds be not anſwerable to our Devotions, Prayer is but Lip-labour. But now Juſtice, and Charity, and Humility, and ſuch like, are ſubordinate to no higher Attainments in this World. They recommend us to the Favour and Acceptance of God effectually; and aim at, and prepare us for, the Bliſs and Glories of a future State. So that, however the Former Sort of Duties may carry a more ſolemn Face, and attract the Eyes and Admiration of the World; yet theſe are of infinitely more Weight and Value. For, till they change the Man and model his Mind aright, thoſe are but empty Shadows, and deceitful Appearances of Virtue. I call them deceitful Appearances, becauſe,

3. *Thirdly*, Thoſe Acts, if not prudently ordered, are liable to this farther mighty Inconvenience; that they abate

abate our Zeal in the Purſuit of ſolid Virtue, and are capable of being turned to ſerve very ill Purpoſes. They frequently impoſe upon our Judgments by falſe Notions of Religion, and expoſe us to the Danger of placing it, where it really is not. They diſpoſe us to imaginary Confidences, and carry the Mind away after Ceremony and Shew; they devour much of our Leiſure, employ much of our Pains; and, which is worſt of all, put us upon deſpiſing the more valuable, but leſs pompous, Inſtances of Goodneſs. They betray indiſcreet People into that fatal Error, of ſuppoſing, that the Breach of the ſecond Table may be bought off and compounded for, by an uncommon Niceneſs in the Obſervation of the Firſt; and, that ſome peculiar voluntary Severities will bear them out in the neglect of plain Commands, and atone for many and grievous Violations of moral Duty. Thus our bleſſed Saviour reproves *the Tithing of Mint, and Anniſe, and Cummin*, as taken in, to ſupply the Place of *Righteouſneſs, and Mercy, and Faith*, by much *the weightier Matters of the Law*. Thus *Faſting and hanging down the Head like a Bulruſh* are expoſed by *Iſaiah*, becauſe many, who did ſo, *faſted for Strife and Debate, and to ſmite with the Fiſt of Wickedneſs*. And thus the length of the Phariſees Prayers is repreſented, as an Artifice to cover their Oppreſſion in *devouring Widows Houſes*. Nor were theſe Abuſes confined to that People, or that Generation; but every Age, and every Perſuaſion, have ſeen and felt the Miſchief of laying too great a Streſs upon affected Auſterities and Devotions. And we cannot but know by Experience, what a Cloak to Injuſtice a preciſe Converſation hath oftentimes been made, by diſſembling Wretches, whoſe Godlineſs is Gain. Saints on God's Day, but Devils all the Reſt of the Week; and whoſe Zeal conſiſts, not ſo much in amending themſelves,

Matt. xxiii. 23.

Iſa. lviii. 4, 5.

Luke xx. 47.

ſelves, as in cenſuring and ſlandering, condemning and deſpiſing, every body elſe.

If then the pretended Innocence of this Phariſee before us was ſo ſhort and imperfect; and if his boaſted Righteouſneſs was liable to ſo juſt Exceptions: Our Wonder may very well ceaſe, that his Prayer found no better Acceptance; and that even that Publican, the Object of his Scorn, ſhall return Home *juſtified*, rather than he. For, though we are at liberty to ſuppoſe this Man's former Life were blameable, yet the Stains of his Guilt appear to have been waſhed away by Repentance. A Repentance, which proved its own Sincerity, by the profoundeſt Remorſe, and the exemplary Modeſty of his Behaviour. Theſe ſhew him to us a Pattern of true Humility; a Virtue more valuable than all the Faſting in the World. For it takes down that partial Conceit and Self-Love, which the Philoſophers of old wiſely called the inmoſt Garment of the Soul, the vicious Paſſion, which ſticks cloſeſt to us, and of all others is laſt and hardeſt put off. A Virtue, that carries its own Commendation; pleaſing to God, beneficial to our Brethren, and improving to ourſelves. For it defrauds none, hurts none, but renders to all their due. To God, by magnifying his Mercy and Grace, and unfeignedly lamenting our own Vileneſs and Impotence: To Men, by allowing, nay by rejoicing in, their juſt Praiſes and Deſerts. It detracts not, judges not, ſlanders not, deſpiſes not, but contains itſelf within its own Sphere: Triumphs not in the Faults of others, but ſhews every Man his own. It opens our Ear to Diſcipline, makes us fit to be treated with, eaſy to be perſuaded, ſuſceptible of Advice, patient of Reproof; and, by laying our Mouths in the Duſt, by diſavowing all Merit, and taking Sanctuary only in Mercy, it makes us a Foundation deep and ſtrong, a ſure Foundation of *a Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* 2 Cor. v. 1.

The

The Sum of all, I think, amounts to thus much. That, however Men may miſtake themſelves, or one another, *God always hath reſpect unto the lowly, but beholds the Proud afar off:* That no paſt Offences, how many, how heinous, how habitual and inveterate ſoever, will ſhut out from his Pardon any Sinner, who humbly bewails and heartily forſakes them: That a lofty Conceit of our own Sufficiency differs as much from the Teſtimony of a truly good Conſcience, as the Swellings of a Diſeaſe, from the kindly Proportions of a healthful Body: That a theatrical Affectation of Godlineſs, with Pride and Uncharitableneſs, and diſdainful Judgment of others, is nearer to Hell, than a long profligate and ſcandalous Courſe of Life, with Contrition, and Charity, and Lowlineſs of Spirit: That it behoves us therefore to take good Heed, leſt even the moſt ſolemn Duties of Religion be abuſed and turned againſt us: And that he only attends upon theſe as he ought, who really mortifies his Vanity and his Paſſions, and brings himſelf to be more humble, more charitable, more ſenſible of his own Failings, and leſs ſevere upon thoſe of other People: And, *Laſtly*, That the proper Way of a Sinner's applying for Mercy and Grace, (and all of us are Sinners) is, not arrogantly to thank God, that we are *not as other Men are*; but, as the pureſt of Churches hath directed us, *meekly to acknowledge our Vileneſs, and truly to repent us of our Faults.* For our good Lord hath promiſed, and it is the expreſs Deſign of this Parable to aſſure us, that *they, whoſe Conſciences by Sin are accuſed, by his merciful Pardon ſhall be abſolved, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour:* To whom, *&c.*

Pſa. cxxxviii. 6.

Collect in Comminat. Service.

The Twelfth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve; pour down upon us the Abundance of thy Mercy, forgiving us those Things whereof our Consciences are afraid, and giving us those good Things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

Isai. lxv. 24. *Psal.* x. 17. —lxxxvi. 5, 15. *Eph.* ii. 4, 5, *&c.*

The EPISTLE.

2 Cor. iii. 4.

4. *SUCH Trust have we through Christ to Godward.*

5. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any Thing as of ourselves: But our Sufficiency is of God.*

PARAPHRASE.

4, 5. The Trust we have of our Ministry being effectual, is in God, and in those Abilities, which he, for Christ's Sake, gives us to this Purpose; not upon any of our own.

6. *Who also hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.*

6. It is he, that animates and blesses our Labours in propagating this New Covenant, which does not only declare Mens Duty, but assist them in it. For the Law, which did the Former only, left Men obnoxious to Death; but the Gospel, which entitles them to the Graces of God's Spirit, does thereby entitle them to Life eternal.

7. *But if the Ministration of Death written and graven on Stones, was glorious, so that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the Face of Moses, for the Glory of his Countenance, which Glory was to be done away:*

7. That Law was written in Stones only, because only helping Men in the Knowledge of God's Will. And yet God gave very significant Intimations of his Favour to the Ministry of it, though such as were not to continue, and though it could not deliver from Death.

8, 9. I

8, 9. Is it not reaſonable then to think, that he will more ſignally favour the Miniſtry of a Diſpenſation ſo much more beneficial, as the Goſpel is: Which does not leave Men in Guilt and Death, but brings Pardon, and Life, and Grace, and helps Men to do, as well as to know, their Duty: And which, upon theſe Accounts, is the Miniſtration (the only Miniſtration) of the *Spirit* and of *Righteouſneſs*.

8. *How ſhall not the Miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious?*

9. *For if the Miniſtration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs exceed in Glory.*

COMMENT.

Chap. ii. 14. *to* Chap. iii. 3. Ver. 3. THE Apoſtle, having, with great Satisfaction, mentioned the marvellous Efficacy and Succeſs which attended the Preaching of the Goſpel; as in other Places, and by the Reſt of his Brethren and Fellow-Labourers:

Ver. 4. So particularly by himſelf, and in regard of theſe *Corinthians*; does, at the beginning of the Scripture now in Hand, declare his firm Belief and Expectation of the Continuance and Increaſe of that Efficacy and Succeſs. Whereby, leſt any ſhould ſuſpect, that he arrogated too much to himſelf; he declares this Confidence to be entirely fixed upon God, for the Sake and Merits of Jeſus

Ver. 5. Chriſt; that the Converſion of Men to the true Faith is an Undertaking, to which the Wit and Parts, the Learning and Labour of Men, even when beſt accompliſhed to perſuade, is in no Degree equal; and, that theſe are Events entirely owing to the Spirit of God; partly, by his extra-

Ver. 6. ordinary Operations, enabling the Miniſters of the *New Teſtament* to make the moſt convincing Evidence of the Truth; and partly, by his ordinary and Aſſiſting Graces diſpoſing the Minds of their Hearers to embrace the Goſpel, ſo delivered and atteſted. All which he confirms, with this

this farther Argument for his Truſt; that ſuch Aſſiſtances, of the Holy Spirit, and the Succeſſes proportionable to them, might be depended upon, in favour and for the Promotion of the Goſpel; becauſe the Promiſe of that Spirit is a Privilege peculiar to the Goſpel; ſuch, as no other Diſpenſation, nor even that of the Law of *Moſes*, ever covenanted for. And upon this Head St. *Paul* enlarges, to ſhew the Difference between theſe two Diſpenſations, and the juſt Pre-eminence of the Evangelical above the Legal, with regard to this Privilege in particular. Ver. 6, 7, 8, &c.

Such is the Deſign and true Import of the Epiſtle for the Day: Of which it ſhall be my Endeavour to make ſome profitable Improvement, by the following Remarks:

1. *Firſt*, The Pattern ſet us here by St. *Paul*, is a good Inſtruction both to Teachers and Hearers, to what Cauſe the ſucceſsful Pains of the Former, and the Conviction and Obedience of the Latter, are of right to be aſcribed. That both the One, and the Other, I mean, are entirely owing to the Grace and Good Spirit of God.

The Inſufficiency of *ourſelves, to think any Thing as of ourſelves*, acknowledged by the Apoſtle in his own Name, and that of his Fellow-workers in the Propagation of the Goſpel, does manifeſtly relate to this Matter of bringing Men over to the Faith, by the Force of human Art and Reaſoning. An Attempt which they, of all Men living, were fartheſt from being qualified for; becauſe viſibly deſtitute both of thoſe natural and acquired Accompliſhments, which are fitted to work ſuch an Effect. The Defects therefore, both of Parts and Study, were to them abundantly ſupplied and compenſated, by ſuch miraculous Inſpirations and Powers, as are called with great Propriety of Speech, *The Demonſtration of the Spirit*, becauſe they could come from none but God. 1 Cor. ii. 4.

And

And theſe, allowing them to come from Him, were Proofs, that God was in the Cauſe they promoted and confirmed, and that he approved the Perſons endued with them; as acting for his Service, and by his Commiſſion.

Theſe were Operations and Effects, accommodated to the Circumſtances of a Religion, as yet unſettled. But though the Condition of it, as now received and eſtabliſhed, have rendered the Continuance of them needleſs to ſucceeding Ages: Yet, whereſoever we ſee the ſame Effect, it certainly proceeds from the ſame Cauſe, though working in a Manner leſs apparent and ſurpriſing. For there is a corrupt Principle of Fleſh and Senſe in the Breaſt of every Man, too obſtinate for Reaſon alone to deal with; and much more likely to pervert and draw that over, than to hearken to, and be won by it. Nothing will find itſelf a Match for this, leſs than a contrary Principle ſuperior to Nature; by which, our Minds receiving a new Turn, Nature may find itſelf conquered and corrected. 'Tis thus only, that a fair Hearing can be obtained for thoſe Arguments, which would eſtabliſh the Spiritual Part in its juſt Government over the Senſual, and place the Promiſes of Happineſs to the Soul, in higher Eſteem, than any worldly Profits or Pleaſures of the Body. This indeed, in the ordinary Methods of acting, is done, by ſo ſecret and gentle a Concurrence of God's Spirit with ours; that all might ſeem to be the Reſult of our own Reaſon, did not both Scripture and Experience teſtify, that, albeit, the Manner of working be undiſcernible, yet the Work itſelf can be none but God's. For we know, that *in us, that is, in our Fleſh, dwelleth no good Thing*; and therefore, when we will and act any Thing that is good, this cannot be from thoſe Inclinations of our own, which ſtand bent the contrary Way; but from ſome Cauſe over-ruling and altering thoſe

Rom. vii. 18.

John iii. 6.

thoſe Inclinations. And this is ſuch a Change and Overruling, as is really worthy the Power of God. For, what Power leſs than his, can thus turn the Hearts of rational Agents, and yet leave them in the Exerciſe of their native Choice? This is a more glorious, and, when well conſidered, a more wonderful, Act of Omnipotency, than any exerted upon dead and ſenſeleſs Matter. And our Church ſhews, that ſhe hath well conſidered it, by beginning the daily Prayer, which begs his Bleſſing and Grace upon the Clergy and their Congregations, with this very ſignificant Compellation, *Almighty and Everlaſting God, who alone workeſt great Marvels, ſend down*, &c. the *healthful Spirit of thy Grace*, &c. 'Tis this, which by producing Holy and Spiritual Effects, approves himſelf not only an Holy, but an Almighty Spirit. 'Tis this which enables us to underſtand, and labour, and teach, rightly, diligently, and profitably. 'Tis this diſpoſes you to hear and read attentively, to conſider and judge impartially, to believe and obey conſcientiouſly, to perſevere ſtedfaſtly. The Beginning, the Progreſs, the Finiſhing, of all our Virtues are owing to this Principle: And without it, all the moſt accurate Reaſonings are like Seed ſown upon the Sand. For, till Grace have prepared the Soil, no good Thing can take Root. And therefore, in every kindly Growth of this Nature, neither to the *Planter*, nor to the *Waterer*, nor to the Perſon planted or watered, is the Praiſe and Product due; but ſolely to *God who giveth the Increaſe*. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

This Grace St. *Paul*, in the Paſſage now before us, aſſerts to be a Privilege peculiar to Chriſtians. And upon that Account, contends for the Glory and Excellence of the Goſpel, ſo far above that of the Law, as to repreſent that foregoing, perfectly eclipſed by the ſurpaſſing Brightneſs of this ſubſequent, Diſpenſation. To this Purpoſe he ſtiles the Law the *Letter*, but the Goſpel the *Spirit*; he af- Ver. 6.

Ver. 7, 8, 9. firms of the Law, that *it killeth*, and is the *Miniſtration of Death and Condemnation*; of the Goſpel, that *it giveth Life*, and is *the Miniſtration of the Spirit and of Righteouſneſs*: He infers, Laſtly, That the Glory of the Latter muſt needs exceed the Glory of the Former: Both upon the Account of its Effects, which are more beneficial; and upon the Account of its Duration. For, *That* is *done away*, but *this remaineth*. Theſe Particulars deſerve a little Conſideration.

Ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 11.

1. *Firſt*, Let us obſerve the different Titles given to the Law and the Goſpel, the *Letter* and the *Spirit*, and wherein the Reaſon of that Difference lies. Now the Apoſtle hath, I think, ſufficiently explained his Meaning, and the Significance of theſe Titles, in this very Chapter. For he hath told us, that the Law was *written and engraven in Stones*; that is, in the *two Tables* brought down by *Moſes* out of Mount *Horeb*, where God hath detained him forty Days and Nights together. The Uſe whereof to the *Iſraelites* extended no farther, than merely a Declaration of their Duty, together with the Sanctions and Penalties, and what would be the Conſequences of performing or Tranſgreſſing it. On the other Hand, The Goſpel is *the Spirit*, becauſe *written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God*; *not in Tables of Stone, but in the Fleſhly Tables of the Heart*. To underſtand the true Force of that Phraſe *fleſhly Tables*, let it be remembered, that God, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, promiſes to his People as aſignal Bleſſing, *that he will take away the ſtony Heart out of their Fleſh, and will give them an Heart of Fleſh*. And by *Jeremiah*, *that he will put his Law in their inward Parts, and will write it in their Hearts, and he will be their God, and they ſhall be his People*. The former Promiſe imports a Cure

Ver. 7.

Exod. xxiv. —xxxiv.

Ver. 3.

—19. xxxvi. 26. xxxi. 33.

a Cure of their Obſtinacy, and bringing them to a Temper, ſenſible and tender, and fit to receive good Impreſſions; the Latter denotes ſufficient Information in, and a good Liking to, their Duty. And thus the Goſpel here is called the *Spirit*; becauſe conveying to Believers ſuch Illuminations and Graces of the Holy Ghoſt, as do not only enable them to know, but diſpoſe them to love and to practice, that which it commands.

Some indeed there are, who have thought this Title to be given it, becauſe of that Spiritual Nature, and Purity, and ſubſtantial Holineſs enjoined there; ſo oppoſing it to the Levitical and ritual Law, which they ſuppoſed termed the *Letter*, becauſe the Services and Ceremonies of it had no intrinſic Worth to recommend them, nor any Conſideration for inducing Men to Obedience, but purely their being the Commands of God, or, as we may ſay, the *Letter of the Law*. But I think it exceeding plain, that this could not be St. *Paul*'s Senſe of the Matter; becauſe the *Letter* at the *Sixth*, and the *Miniſtration written and engraven* in the *Seventh Verſe*, are one and the ſame. But the Hiſtory of *Moſes* is expreſs, that the Writing of God in the *two Tables* of Stone was only the *Ten Commandments*, or moral Law. Now this Letter does certainly contain, and virtually enjoin, the ſame ſubſtantial Holineſs and ſpiritual Purity, as the Goſpel. So that the Difference truly lies in this, that the *Letter*, in requiring them, left Men to their natural Powers; but the *Spirit* does not only require them, but aſſiſt and enable Men with Grace, for the Diſcharge of them.

Compare Exod. xxiv. xxxiv. *and* Deut. x.

2. This Explanation miniſters ſome Light into the *Second* Difference here taken notice of; conſiſting in the different Effects of theſe Diſpenſations. The declared Puniſhment of Sin is Death. Conſequently,

the more Precepts are multiplied, the more obnoxious to Death the Perſons obliged by them become; for all Sin is the Tranſgreſſion of ſome Law. Now the *Letter* is therefore ſaid to *kill*, to *miniſter Death and Condemnation*, and the like; becauſe it enacted Commandments and brought Men to a Conſcience of their Guilt; for Things, which in the corrupt State of Nature, they were in no Condition of eſcaping by their own Strength. It propounded Duties in themſelves ſpiritual and good; it prohibited Practices ſenſual and evil; but the Parties living under it were carnal and enſlaved to Sin. Thus it was not the Intent, but the accidental Conſequence of the Law, to miniſter to Death and Condemnation. The true Cauſe was the Wickedneſs and Weakneſs of the Perſons living under it. For this the Law provided no Remedy; for that it promiſed no Pardon: And it is therefore ſaid to kill thoſe, whom it left liable to die. But (as St. *Chryſoſtom* well obſerves upon the Place) the Law is not to be blamed: For, when the Malefactor ſuffers, though the Judge, the Evidence, the Executioner, and the Statute upon which he is tried and convicted, be, each in their Degree and Manner, Inſtruments and Occaſions, yet himſelf, and the Crime he ſuffers for, are ſtrictly and properly the ſole Cauſe of his Death. All which agrees punctually with the Account of this Matter reaſoned at large, in the *Seventh* Chapter to the *Romans*.

The Goſpel again is ſaid to *give Life*, to be the Miniſtration of the *Spirit*, and of *Righteouſneſs*. Which Effects have, all Three, a natural and neceſſary Dependence upon each other. Death, as was juſt now argued, follows from Sin, as its meritorious Cauſe. To this therefore every Man is liable, and in the Eye of the Law actually Dead, while Guilt continues upon him. Now the Goſpel, by promiſing Pardon to the Sinner, abſolves him from that Sentence. And this is

the

the juſtifying Grace of the Goſpel; called here the *Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs*, as oppoſed to *Condemnation*. But, the Frailty of Nature not being able to ſuſtain itſelf, the ſame Penalty and Miſery muſt needs return, by reaſon of daily Sins and Infirmities. And therefore here again the Goſpel relieves us by the Communications of Sanctifying Grace; in which reſpect it is called the *Miniſtration of the Spirit*, as inclining and enabling us to pleaſe God; and thus it is oppoſed to the *Miniſtration of Death written in Stones*, which only acquainted Men what would pleaſe God, but contributed nothing at all, either to the Diſpoſition, or to the Power, of doing it. A neceſſary Conſequence of theſe two Sorts of Grace, received and continued in, is a Right to Immortality; that being entirely done away, which made ſuch Perſons capable of dying. Therefore again, this *Spirit*, as a ſure Pledge of Reſurrection to endleſs Bliſs, is ſaid to *give Life*; in oppoſition to that Letter, which in effect *killeth* thoſe, whom it condemns to Death for Diſobedience, and at the ſame Time leaves in a helpleſs State; without any Remiſſion for paſt, or Prevention againſt future, Diſobedience.

Ver. 9.

Ver. 7.

Ver. 6.

By this Time it appears, how properly that Goſpel is ſtiled the *Spirit*, to the Believers whereof the Promiſes of the Holy Spirit and his Aſſiſtances do of right belong. The Perſons baptized into this Faith, are ſaid to be *born again of Water and of the Spirit*; to have *Power* in Virtue of that Second Birth *to become the Sons of God*; to receive *the Spirit of Adoption*, as a Mark and ſure Teſtimony of that Filial Relation to him; to *walk in the Spirit*, *to be led by the Spirit*, to be *quickened by the Spirit*, to be *raiſed from the Dead by the Spirit*, and in the mean while to be *ſealed*

John iii. 5. —i. 12, 13. Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 15. Gal. v. 16. Rom. viii. 14. Gal. v. 11. Rom. viii. 11. —viii. 9. Epheſ. i. 13, 14.

with that *Spirit* (which is very emphatically called the *Spirit of Promiſe*, becauſe indented for in this Goſpel-Covenant) *as an Earneſt of their* future *Inheritance*. Theſe, and a great Number of Texts beſides, leave us no reaſonable Grounds of Doubt, whether the ordinary Graces of the Holy Spirit be not a Goſpel-Privilege. And it is very remarkable, that the extraordinary and miraculous Gifts are frequently affirmed to be ſuch likewiſe. Thus, in his firſt miraculous Effuſion on the Day of Pentecoſt, St. *Peter* argues that Event to have been the juſt Accompliſhment of *Joel*'s Prophecy. Who, ſpeaking of *the laſt Days*, (the Days of the *Meſſiah*) mentions, as an eminent Prerogative of that Time, that God would then *pour out of his Spirit upon all Fleſh*. And, with reference to the Converſion of *Cornelius* and his Company, he urges their ſpeaking with Tongues, as an Evidence, that God hath accepted them, and *purified their Hearts by Faith*; he argues, that in virtue of this Mark of God's Acceptance, they had obtained a Right to Baptiſm, and to all Privileges common to Chriſtians, notwithſtanding they never ſubmitted to the Rites of the Law. The Conſequence whereof is, that this Benefit could not be imputed to that Legal, but was entirely owing to the Evangelical, Diſpenſation. Thus again St. *Paul*, in the Scripture now at hand, refers to thoſe ſupernatural and powerful Operations; as given to make the Planters of this Faith *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*. And, reproaching the Folly of his *Galatians*, for returning to the Bondage of the Law, he uſes this very obſervable Expoſtulation; *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* And again; (to ſhew what Gifts and Operations of the Spirit he means) *He that miniſtereth to*

Acts ii. 16, 17.

Compare Acts x. 46. xi. 15, 16, 17. xv. 8, 9.

Gal. iii. 2.

you

you the Spirit, and worketh Miracles among you, doth he it by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith? Ver. 5.

From hence it is ſufficiently clear, that the Graces of the Holy Spirit, in any Acceptation whatſoever, are a Goſpel-Privilege. But, whether a Privilege in common to it with, or excluſive of, all other Diſpenſations, and peculiar to this alone; is an Enquiry, that ſtill remains, and is neceſſary to be conſidered. The rather, becauſe nothing leſs than its being ſuch in this latter Senſe, is ſufficient to bear St. *Paul* out, in beſtowing upon it the Title of *Spirit*. The ſame may be ſaid of the other Diſtinctions here, which are not only invidious and diſparaging, but a great Indignity and Wrong done to the Law; if that were really more than a bare Letter, and entitled the Perſons living under it to any, though more ſparing, Communications of the ſame Spirit. Of which I own there may be thought theſe two probable Appearances; *Firſt*, That ſome Promiſes of this Kind are manifeſtly contained in the *Old Teſtament*. And *Secondly*, that we may find many Inſtances of Perſons, conducted and acted by this Spirit of God, long before our Saviour's Time and the Preaching of his Goſpel. Now, though ſome Things ſaid to this Purpoſe heretofore might, if carefully attended to, ſuffice to clear theſe Difficulties; yet I ſhall upon this Occaſion, conſider the Point a little more diſtinctly, and give as perſpicuous a State of it as I can.

See Epiſt. S. aft. Chriſtm. Circumcif. 4 *S. in* Lent.

In order hereunto, I deſire ſpecial Notice may be taken, that the Covenant with God in Chriſt was made with our lapſed Parents, immediately after their Fall; that this Covenant in Subſtance hath been always one and the ſame: The general *Terms* of it conſiſting, in a Saviour to take away Sin and all the pernicious Conſequences of it, on God's Part; and in Faith and Obedience on Man's Part; that the Methods of

applying Salvation have indeed been different, as have likewiſe the Manner of exhibiting this Saviour, and the Inſtances of exerciſing that Faith and Obedience. But, whether we regard the more ſimple Worſhip of the Patriarchs, or the Promulgation of the moral Law, or the Ceremonies of the Levitical, or the explicit Belief of the Goſpel; ſtill the Author of Salvation, and the Object and End of Faith, to every Man, hath all along been *Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame Yeſterday, and To-day, and for ever.* In him alone Men obtain Remiſſion of Sins and Eternal Life: And, whatever Diſpenſations have intervened, they have been all concurrent with, and ſubſervient to, this grand and general one. None, taken apart from this, can be of any Avail, for ſpiritual and immortal Benefits; but only, as including, prefiguring, and leading to that Saviour. Theſe Things are proved at large by St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans* and *Galatians*. From the loſt and impotent Condition of Mankind in general; from the Dealings of God with *Abraham* in particular: And, in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, from the Inſufficiency of all legal Sacrifices, and the univerſal Efficacy of Chriſt's one meritorious Sacrifice: From the typical Nature and Deſign of the Ritual Oeconomy of the *Jews*; and particularly from Faith being the only Principle of pleaſing God; and this proved by an Induction of Inſtances, in the moſt eminent Saints, throughout all Ages of the World. From hence it is, that our Lord and his Apoſtles ſo often appeal to the Evidences of the *Old Teſtament*, declaring they taught nothing diſagreeable to, but only perfective of theſe; and hence, in one Word, that the Preaching of the Goſpel is ſtyled a *Manifeſtation of that Righteouſneſs of God without the Law, which is witneſſed by the Law and the Prophets.*

Heb. xiii. 8.

Rom. iii. 21.

Upon theſe Grounds duly conſidered, we ſhall find no great Difficulty to juſtify the Pre-eminence aſcribed to the Goſpel here, in bar to any other Diſpenſation whatſoever.

1. For

1. For *First*, Be it, as indeed it muſt be, confeſſed that there are ſeveral Promiſes of the Spirit of Grace in the *Old Teſtament*. Theſe are frequently to be met with in the prophetic Writings, nor are they wanting even in *Moſes* himſelf. For he alſo foretels and promiſes, *God ſhall circumciſe thy Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayeſt live.* This Circumciſion of the Heart is certainly an Operation and Effect, of which none but the Spirit of God is capable. But this is no Effect contracted for by the Covenant made in *Horeb*. For, of that and their Behaviour under it, *Moſes* had ſaid but a little before, *The Lord hath not given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to ſee, and Ears to hear, unto this Day.* In ſhort, neither the Moral Law, nor the Ceremonial, contain the leaſt Title of a Promiſe of Inward Grace. And therefore, however any ſuch may be found in the Writings of the *Old Teſtament*, yet were not ſuch Promiſes any Branches of the Legal, but properly belonged to the Evangelical Diſpenſation. And yet they were very fitly interſperſed in *Moſes* and the Prophets, to ſhew, that even this Diſpenſation, of which they are a Part, was then in Force. Accordingly the Apoſtle contends, that *Moſes* is there *deſcribing the Righteouſneſs which is of Faith*. And the Author to the *Hebrews* proves that famous Paſſage in *Jeremiah*, *I will write my Laws in their Hearts*, &c. to be a Covenant, altogether diſtinct from that made with *Iſrael*, at their coming out of *Egypt*. Nay, and even the *Jewiſh* Interpreters themſelves do not ſcruple to own, that theſe are Deſcriptions and Prophecies, which point at the Days and Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*.

Deut. xxx. 6.

— xix. 4.

Rom. x. 6.

Heb. viii. 7—10, &c.

2. So that *Secondly*, Although ſeveral, and indeed All, good Perſons were made Partakers of this Spirit heretofore,

heretofore, yet does not this overthrow Saint *Paul*'s Argument. He never intended to deny, that any under the Law had this Spirit communicated to them; But his Meaning is, that none, no not even they who had it under the Law, had it by Virtue of the Law. He affirms, that the Spirit alone gives Life: Are we to infer from thence, that all, who lived under the *Letter*, died and periſhed in their Sins? By no Means. But thus much is implied by it; that as many as then obtained Remiſſion of Sins and Eternal Life, did owe thoſe Benefits, not to the Law, but to the Covenant of God in Chriſt, which, in all Ages, took Effect on the Children of Faith and Obedience. And conſequently, what was defective in that Law, and in Human Nature, did, in every Age, receive a Supply from this Goſpel Covenant; which hath continued, in all theſe ſaving Effects, the ſame from the Beginning, and ſhall do ſo to the End of the World.

Mean while God hath not been wanting in ſeveral Inſtances, to give undeniable Proofs of this Matter. As particularly, (1.) In the more liberal Effuſions of this Spirit, ſince the Publication of this Goſpel, of which it is ſo glorious an Appendage. There being no Compariſon between, either its miraculous Powers, or its ſanctifying Graces, as they were dealt before, and as they have been poured out ſince, our Bleſſed Saviour's Death. (2.) In the total Loſs of them to the *Jews*. For the ceaſing of Prophecy and Miracles among them, even before the Birth of Chriſt, ſhew the Extraordinary, and their incorrigible Obſtinacy and Blindneſs prove the Ordinary, Graces of the Holy Spirit to have forſaken them. Conſequently his Influences of both Sorts are ſuch, as the Synagogue had no Right to, nor that Covenant or Law any Hand in procuring, which diſtinguiſhes their Synagogue from the Church of Chriſt. So that the *Letter*, which at no Time was able to give Life to others, is now, and

for

for a long Time hath been, no beter than a dead one it ſelf. And this leads me to ſay ſomewhat concerning the *Two* Reaſons, given by St. *Paul*, for the Goſpel excelling the Law in Glory. The one, becauſe its Effects are more beneficial; the other becauſe its Continuance is more durable. Of which very briefly.

By this Glory we may underſtand, either in general the Excellence of the Chriſtian Religion, and the Honour and Eſteem due to it upon that Account; or more particularly, with regard to that Confidence of Succeſs expreſſed here by St. *Paul*, the ſignal Appearances of Almighty God in its Favour.

In the Former Senſe, the Chriſtian excells all other Religions, becauſe, as hath been ſhewn, it conveys to its Profeſſors Benefits of incomparably greater Value. For to this alone we are indebted, for the Pardon of our Sins, for the renewing of our Nature, for all the Spiritual Comforts and Advantages of this Life, and for the undoubted Aſſurance, and inconceivable Happineſs, of another. Bleſſings, with which all the temporal Proſperities contracted for by the Law, are not worthy to be named. Nor is it a ſmall Inducement to our higheſt Eſteem, that God hath thought fit to make this an everlaſting Covenant. For that Perpetuity plainly intimates its Perfection. And, as the Apoſtle reaſons, that *if the firſt Covenant had been faultleſs, there would have been no mention of a Second*; and that the Levitical Prieſthood was aboliſhed *for the Weakneſs and Unprofitableneſs thereof*: So, by continuing the Goſpel-covenant from the Beginning to the End of the World, is evidently implied its Uſefulneſs, and Sufficiency for all the noble Purpoſes intended to be ſerved by it; and, that this is not to be ſucceeded by any other, becauſe it is not poſſible there ſhould be any better. Heb. vii. 7. vii. 18.

In the latter Senſe it muſt needs excel likewiſe, becauſe the Salvation of Mankind is of all Things moſt agreeable

agreeable to the Father and Lover of Souls: The very End he had in View from the Inſtitution of this Covenant; and the nobleſt Work of his incomprehenſible Goodneſs and Mercy. And therefore, ſo long as there are Souls to be ſaved, ſo long as a State of Diſcipline and Improvement laſts; his Honour will be concerned, to promote and preſerve a Diſpenſation, neceſſary for the Accompliſhment of that gracious Deſign. And indeed his Wiſdom can never be ſufficiently admired and adored, for the wonderful Contrivance at the firſt; for the Management of the different Adminiſtrations ſubordinate and preparatory to it; for the ſending his own Bleſſed Son *in the Fulneſs of Time*, to publiſh it by his Doctrine, and to ratify it by his Blood; for the aſtoniſhing Powers of his Holy Spirit, to confirm it by Miracles; for the Grace of that Spirit exemplified in the Lives and Deaths of Martyrs and Saints innumerable; for the wonderful Propagation and Eſtabliſhment of it, by Methods of Meekneſs and Patience; for the Protection of it from the Malice of Perſecutors, and the Artifices of Heretics; and for his gracious Promiſe, of the Performance whereof ſo many paſt Experiments are moſt comfortable Pledges, that *the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it.* Lord, give us Grace ſeriouſly to conſider, heartily to be thankful for, conſcientiouſly to improve, and to live worthy of our Advantages: That We, who call ourſelves Chriſtians, may be ſo much more thy People in all Holy Obedience, as thou art ſo much more our God in the Diſtinctions of thy Bounty and Favour, than any other that were ever called by thy Name! So, as thou vouchſafeſt at preſent to *Guide us by the Counſel* of thy Spirit, ſhalt thou advance us from Grace to Grace, and after that *receive us into Glory*, for his Sake, who, *through the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant*, purchaſed both Grace and Glory, for all them who

Matt. xvi. 18.

Pſal. lxxiii.

who walk no longer in the *Oldneſs of the Letter*, but in the *Newneſs of the Spirit*: Even thy dear Son *Jeſus Chriſt*. To whom, *&c.*

The Twelfth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Mark vii. 31.

PARAPHRASE.

31. *JESUS departing from the Coaſts of Tyre and Sidon, came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midſt of the Coaſts of Decapolis.*

32. *And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an * Impediment in his Speech: and they beſeech him to put his Hand upon him.*

32. * A deaf and dumb Perſon, that (as the Manner of Bleſſing any one was) he might lay his Hands upon him.

33. *And he took him aſide from the Multitude, and put his Fingers into his Ears, and he ſpit, and touched his Tongue.*

33. By theſe bodily Actions ſignifying the Application of his Divine Power to the Parts ſo touched.

34. *And looking up to Heaven, he ſighed, and ſaith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.*

35. *And ſtraightway his Ears were opened, and the String of his Tongue was looſed, and he ſpake plain.*

36. *And he charged them that they ſhould tell no Man: but the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed it,*

37. *And were beyond Meaſure aſtoniſhed, ſaying, † He hath done all Things well: he maketh both the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to ſpeak.*

37. † Why is this Man ill ſpoken of, who thus in all Points anſwers the Character of a mighty Prophet, by his miraculous Power? *making*, &c.

COMMENT.

THE Subject I intend to inſiſt upon at preſent, is contained in the 36th Verſe. There we read, that our Lord, having gratified the Friends of this deaf and dumb Man, in a miraculous Cure performed at their Requeſt, *charged them that no Man ſhould know it: but the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed it.*

Now from hence I ſhall take Occaſion,

I. *Firſt*, To enquire, what Reaſons probably might move our bleſſed Saviour, to forbid the divulging of this, and ſome other of his Miracles, as we find he frequently did.

II. *Secondly*, To conſider the Carriage of thoſe People, who took the Liberty to diſobey this Command. And,

III. *Laſtly*, To propoſe ſome uſeful Reflections, which the foregoing Heads will naturally ſuggeſt to us.

1. *Firſt*, The Reaſons, inducing our Lord to forbid the divulging this and ſome other Miracles, might probably be theſe that follow:

1. To decline, as much as was poſſible, the Envy and Oppoſition of the Phariſees. He did not only *know what was in Man*; and conſequently, what Entertainment each of his Actions would meet with; but he had, by many Experiments, found, how thoſe Men in particular ſtood affected towards him. He ſaw them ſo far from any Diſpoſition to improve, by freſh Demonſtrations of his Divine Power; that thoſe did but add to their Guilt, and provoke them to Blaſphemy and Rage. The Conſtruction they made of ſuch miraculous Recoveries, was, that he diſpoſſeſſed Devils, by a good Underſtanding and ſecret Colluſion *with the Prince of the Devils*. This Point he ſometimes vouchſafed to argue with them, and expoſed the Unreaſonableneſs

John ii. 25.

Matt. xii. 24.

ableneſs and Abſurdity of ſuch Malice; but this gave him great Interruption in his main Work, and engaged him in Conteſts, diſagreeable to the Peacefulneſs of his Temper. For which Reaſon, he choſe often to retire quietly, rather than enter into contentious Diſputes in his own Juſtification. And, that this was a Part neceſſary in his Character, we have St. *Matthew*'s Authority, on an Occaſion like this now in hand. *When Jeſus had withdrawn himſelf from the Phariſees, great Multitudes followed him, and he healed them all. And charged them, that they ſhould not make him known. That it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken by the Prophet Eſaias, ſaying, Behold my Servant whom I have choſen, my beloved in whom my Soul is well pleaſed, I will put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall ſhew Judgment to the Gentiles. He ſhall not ſtrive nor cry, neither ſhall any Man hear his Voice in the Streets.* So that, though our Lord could have confuted the Folly and Malice of his Slanderers; yet it was more for his Purpoſe, to conceal ſome Evidences of his Power; than to provoke them to be troubleſome, by making that Power public. Matthew xii. 15—19.

2. But neither was Envy and Contradiction all he had to avoid. For thoſe Enemies did not only blaſpheme his Perſon, but attempt upon his Life. The Son of God indeed came into the World, with a Purpoſe to die. But the Scheme laid by the Divine Wiſdom, had ordained a Courſe of many Things, before, and in order to, his Dying. He could alſo, by his Almighty Power, have defeated their wicked Conſpiracies, and borne down their utmoſt Force; (as he afterwards made appear in the Garden, by ſtriking to the Ground with a Word of his Mouth, the Men who came to apprehend him) but this was not a proper Seaſon for exerting that Power. The truth of his Human Nature was now to be atteſted. And, his Appearance at preſent being that of a mere Man, John xviii.

Man, the ſame Methods of prudent Care were fit to be taken, by which common Men in like Caſes are wont to preſerve themſelves. Hence he paſſed from them, when inflamed; withdrew to the Gentiles; deferred his Journies to *Jeruſalem*; went ſecretly up to the Feaſt; made his Eſcape beyond *Jordan*; and drew out his Retreat there to a conſiderable Length. By all this provident and meek Behaviour he declined the Occaſions of irritating his angry Enemies; not from a Dread of dying, ſo much as from a Care to reſerve himſelf for the Exerciſe of his Prophetic Office; till it was proper for that of his Prieſtly One to commence, and ſo put a Period to the teaching Part, by offering himſelf a Sacrifice upon the Croſs.

Luke iv. 30.
John viii. 59.
Mark iii. 7.
John viii. 1, 10.
— x. 39, 40.
— xi. 53, 54.

3. A *Third* probable Reaſon of this Concealment might be, to prevent any Sedition or Tumults among the People. The common Notions of the Meſſiah at that Time are ſufficiently known. And, as it could not become our Saviour to countenance thoſe Errors; ſo neither could it, by rendering himſelf ſuſpected to the Government, to give his Adverſaries the Advantage they deſired. Now every Thing, that contributed to their Belief of his being the Meſſiah, would be a Temptation, to deſert their eſtabliſhed Governors and put themſelves under his Protection, as ordained by God to be their rightful King and victorious Deliverer. Hence, it is likely, the Diſciples are forbidden to declare him the Chriſt, till he ſhould be riſen from the Dead; as well, as becauſe the miraculous Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt was a requiſite Qualification, for bearing that Teſtimony effectually. For what the Effect of ſuch a Perſuaſion would have been, is eaſy to be gathered from one Inſtance, which I look upon, as a ſufficient Juſtification of the Argument I am urging. 'Tis St. *John*'s Account of our Lord's Behaviour, and the Inducement to it, after

Matt. xvi. 20.

feeding

feeding five Thouſand with five Barley Loaves and two ſmall Fiſhes. Then thoſe Men (ſays the Evangeliſt) *when they had ſeen the Miracle that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is of a Truth that Prophet that ſhould come into the World:* A Phraſe, well underſtood to denote the expected Meſſiah. Whereupon immediately follows, *When Jeſus therefore perceived, that they would come, and take him by Force to make him a King, he departed again into a Mountain himſelf alone.* John vi. 14. Ver. 15.

It may poſſibly add ſome Force to theſe Arguments, to obſerve, that, in Places, where the like Conſequences could not be apprehended, our Lord was not ſo much upon the Reſerve. Himſelf told the Woman of *Samaria*, that he was the Chriſt; and ſuffered the Seamen to worſhip him as ſuch, without any Injunction of Silence; and, after diſpoſſeſſing the Demoniac called *Legion*, he even *commanded him to go Home to his Friends, and tell them, how great Things the Lord had done for him.* John iv. Matt. xiv. 33. Mark v. 19. So that, in this Matter, one Thing which ſeems always to be had in View, was the Effect like to follow, upon the Publication or Suppreſſion of his mighty Works, to the Purpoſes that have been here inſiſted upon.

4. But, I make no doubt, another Reaſon for our Lord's Conduct in this Matter was, that he might ſet us an Example of Humility, and of doing Good for Good's Sake. He had directed his Diſciples, to content themſelves with the Knowledge and Approbation of God, and the inward Satisfactions of having diſcharged their Duty: That they ſhould conſider, they ſerve One, who ſees in ſecret, and who will one Day ſhew, that he knows and remembers their good Deeds, by rewarding them openly. As therefore, in other Inſtances of Virtue, ſo here, our Lord approves himſelf a Pattern and Practiſer of his own Doctrine; by not courting the Fame and Praiſe Matth. vi.

of Men, and clearing his Behaviour from all Suſpicion of Vanity. What other hidden Cauſes there might be for ſuch Commands of Secrecy, is beſt known to the infinite Wiſdom of Him, who gave them; but to us theſe are ſufficient. Let us therefore now proceed to the

II. *Second* Head, and conſider the Behaviour of the Parties commanded; as thoſe Words deſcribe it, *But the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed it.* Great arguing there hath been, whether theſe Perſons ſinned or not, in ſo officiouſly divulging that which our Saviour ſo induſtriouſly laboured to conceal. They who condemn them, ground their Severity upon a Notion, that every Precept from the Mouth of Chriſt was ſtrictly obligatory to the Conſcience. Others, more favourable, bear a great Regard to (that οἰκονομία, as the Fathers are uſed to expreſs it) that Manner and Management, which in Prudence became him, while acting, to outward Appearance, as a common Man. Theſe think his divine Authority, as well as his divine Eſſence, to be purpoſely veiled from vulgar Eyes: And preſume, that he is not always to be looked upon in the Quality of a Lawgiver; but comporting himſelf, as Wiſdom and Goodneſs would move a private Perſon to do, under the like Circumſtances. As therefore a generous Friend may deſire not to have his Favours blazed abroad, to ſhew, that he acted upon Principles of Kindneſs and Virtue, without any View of Popularity and Applauſe; and yet the Party obliged may eſteem it his Duty, to let the World know his particular Engagements, and the Bounty of his Benefactor: So our Bleſſed Lord (it hath been conceived) might order the ſuppreſſing this Miracle in Silence, and ſo do what well became Him, as a Giver; and yet theſe Perſons might proclaim it notwithſtanding, as a Teſtimony of that Gratitude, which otherwiſe they apprehended they ſhould

Chryſ. in Matth. viii.

ſhould be wanting in: And ſo conſider what became them to do, as Receivers.

Some Reaſons for this Injunction have indeed been alledged, wherein our Lord's own Quiet and Safety were concerned. And ſo this officious Way of thanking him may be thought an unſeaſonable and ill Return, which, by pretending Reſpect, drew him into manifeſt Danger and Inconvenience. But, this, I think, cannot affect the Caſe in Hand. For, if theſe were Reaſons to Chriſt, they were Reaſons reſerved to himſelf. Had they been communicated, then Diſobedience had been Treachery and Villainy; and a blacker Ingratitude they could not have been guilty of, than by thus rendering His Mercy and Their Benefit a Snare to him. But, in regard they in all Likelihood imputed that Command purely to his Modeſty; they thought themſelves at Liberty to diſobey it. Let it therefore be conſidered, whether thoſe Fathers and Interpreters have not accounted reaſonably for this Action; who from hence call upon us to obſerve, on the one Hand, what Care our Lord took to decline all Suſpicion of Pride and Popularity; on the other, what Pains they took to proclaim his Goodneſs and Power; not with an Intent (ſay they) to ſlight or act contrary to his Order, but purely to expreſs their Gratitude, and an honeſt Zeal for his Praiſe and Honour. For, that the Advancement of his Honour was intended, is plain from the levelling their Commendations directly againſt the malicious Inſinuations of his Slanderers and Detractors. To which Purpoſe the 37th Verſe informs us, that their Publication was to this Effect: *He hath done all Things well; he maketh both the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to ſpeak.*

I have enlarged the rather on this Subject, thereby to give ſome Light to ſeveral other Paſſages of Scripture, much of the like Importance. Otherwiſe, to ſay the Truth, it cannot be of any mighty Moment to

us, whether theſe Perſons acquitted themſelves well or ill in this Affair. To their own Maſter therefore let them ſtand or fall: While we attend to that, which more properly concerns us. Some Moral Reflections, I mean, which it was my Promiſe to raiſe from the foregoing Particulars, as the

III. *Third* and Laſt Head of this Diſcourſe.

1. And *Firſt*, We ſhall do well from hence to obſerve our Engagements to let the World know, how deeply we are indebted to Almighty God for his Mercies. Of the Duty of Thankfulneſs in general I purpoſe to treat hereafter. My preſent Deſign is to ſhew, that we are bound to make our Thanks public. And this is plainly to be gathered, from theſe Perſons thinking it an Injury to our Lord's Goodneſs, to bury it in ſilence; and that their Obligation to extol it was ſo indiſpenſable, that even a peremptory Command to the contrary was not ſufficient to excuſe their omitting ſo to do. If they muſt ſeem to offend, they choſe this, as the more pardonable way; and preferred the Breach of a particular Injunction, before that of Gratitude in general, which Nature had dictated to all Mankind. This Example will render us paſt all Excuſe, if we, who lie under no ſuch Command of Secreſy, ſhould diſingenuouſly (as *David* ſpeaks) *hide God's Righteouſneſs within our Heart, and keep back his Mercy and Truth from the great Congregation:* If we do not *enter into his Gates with Thankſgiving, and come into his Courts with Praiſe:* If we do not expreſs our Thankfulneſs by *ſpeaking Good of his Name, and pay our Vows in the Preſence of all his People.* Thus we are called upon to do, *O praiſe our God, all ye People, and make the Voice of his Praiſe to be heard,* to ſignify, that the Affections, and the Heart, and the Devotions of the Cloſet, are too narrow; and (as we confeſs in our Communion Service) *how very meet, and*

Pſal. xl. 12, 13.
— c. 3.
— cxvi. 12, 13.
— lxvi. 7.

and right, and our bounden Duty it is, that we ſhould at all Times and in all Places give Thanks unto the Lord. The Exhortation, with which our daily public Worſhip begins, aſſigns this, as the firſt of thoſe Purpoſes, for which we aſſemble ſolemnly; *to render Thanks for the great Benefits we have received at God's Hands, and to ſet forth his moſt worthy Praiſe.* And upon this Occaſion, I think it proper to take Notice of one Defect very general among us. In Sickneſs, or Sorrow, or any Calamity or Diſtreſs, we are directed to call in the public Prayers of the Church to our Relief. This is too ſeldom and too ſlightly done. But, even of them who do it, how few obey the other Part of the Church's Order, by making their Thanks for Deliverance equally public? and yet This alſo ought by all Means to be done; that the ſame collective Body may acknowledge the Goodneſs of God, in hearing and anſwering their Prayers: That they may addreſs to him with Fervency and Faith upon all like Occaſions; and that the Parties relieved, and every other Member, may have a worthy Eſteem of the Force and Efficacy of ſuch public and united Interceſſions. All which are Reaſons of ſo great Importance, and ſo directly in the Church's Favour; that the Rubric plainly reſtrains the Right, and Uſe, of a particular Thankſgiving, to ſuch as *have been prayed for, and deſire to return Praiſe.* *See* General Thankſgiving.

2. As their Example, who did thus ſpread the Fame and Miracles of our Lord, teaches us public Gratitude; ſo does his, who forbad this, forbid us Oſtentation, and ſeeking the Eſteem and Admiration of Men. By ſeeking it, I mean making it the principal Aim of our Actions; than which there cannot be a greater Diſhonour to God, or a more fatal Snare to our own Souls.

(1.) The Former; becauſe this were in effect to make new Maſters to ourſelves, and, by a baſe Degeneracy of Spirit, to become Slaves to our Fellow-Servants. For, are the beſt and higheſt of Mortals any

better? Are we not all ſubject to the ſame Laws, and accountable to the ſame Judge? We run the Chriſtian Race, not to gain Acclamations from the Spectators, but to gain Favour and Acceptance from the Giver of the Prize. There is enough, and more than enough, to beget in us a juſt and generous Indifference for the Applauſe of Men, upon many other Accounts: But the moſt unanſwerable Argument is, that howſoever it may pleaſe us in This World, it cannot profit us one Whit in the Next. And, how wretched muſt their Diſappointment needs be, who diſcover too late, that they have taken abundance of Pains, to none, or very ill Purpoſe: And, inſtead of that ſolid Reward they ought to have purſued, have taken up with a little empty Breath, of no more Subſtance than the Air we draw, nor of longer Duration than the Sound it gave?

2. But that is not the worſt of it; for St. *Paul*, expreſſing his Deteſtation of Popularity, ſays with Indignation, *Do I ſeek to pleaſe Men? For if I yet pleaſed Men, I ſhould not be the Servant of Chriſt.* This it ſeems is one of the Maſters, that cannot be ſerved with God. And in Truth, no Temptation is more dangerous or deſtructive of true Piety. The pertinacious Unbelief of the Phariſees is, by our Lord himſelf, imputed to their *loving the Praiſe of Men more than the Praiſe of God:* And the Impoſſibility of their taking any good Impreſſions, to *receiving Honour one of another, and not ſeeking the Honour that cometh from God only.* This brings real Virtue into Diſeſteem. It puts Men upon doing well, not from the Satisfactions of a good Principle and a good Conſcience; but from the Glory and Reputation that attend it: And they, who for this Reaſon are moved to Virtue, if Vice come into Credit, will without great Difficulty go over to that, for the ſame Reaſon. This ſets open the Door to Hypocriſy, and baniſhes Sincerity

Gal. i. 10.

John xii. 43.

John v. 44.

rity and Truth; and then, by affecting to impoſe upon others, the Cheat comes round at laſt, and we by Degrees impoſe upon ourſelves. For it is but too frequent, to take in common Fame to the Judgments we make of our own State; and to imagine ourſelves very Good, when the World thinks and calls us ſo. In a Word, Affectation of Praiſe debaſes the Soul, corrupts the nobleſt Undertakings, chains Men down to the worſt of Slavery; and, after infinite Trouble, generally defrauds them, even of that poor little Recompence they ſo greedily hunt after. For (which is my

3. *Third* and Laſt Reflection) The true Way to ſecure the Honour and Eſteem of Men, is, to decline it, when we beſt deſerve it. Such was the Event of our Lord's Humility here, it even added to his Renown: for *the more he charged them to tell no Man, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed it.* Credit and Commendation Mankind are naturally pleaſed with, and therefore every one expects his Share of it. But when bold and confident People thruſt themſelves forward, and graſp at more than fairly belongs to them; this provokes Envy and Reſentment in others, and renders every ſuch Pretender a common Enemy. For Reputation is one of thoſe good Things, which are ſure to be loſt, by all who go about to engroſs them to themſelves. Beſides, the mean and little Arts, neceſſary for ingratiating with the World, cannot paſs always; and theſe, when detected, leave the Courtiers of Fame and Popularity of all Creatures moſt deſpicable. Let us then do Things worthy of Eſteem and Applauſe, and theſe will ſurely come to Them, who have Patience to wait for them; but, if ſnatched before their Time, like unripe Fruit, they will offend both the Palate and the Stomach. Bad as it is, the World is not yet, and we may reaſonably hope, never will be, ſo bad; but that ſteady, meek, and unaffected Goodneſs will command a great deal of Honour and Reſpect. Nay, even

they, who have not the Heart to be Good themſelves, are ſeldom ſo wretchedly abandoned, that they ſhould ceaſe to love, and pay ſome Deference to, Perſons exemplarily virtuous. Every one joins in helping Modeſty to its Right; and this Grace in particular cannot be long a Loſer, by receeding from its juſt Claims. For there is this moſt deſirable Advantage belonging to it, (a Satisfaction capable of gratifying the vaineſt Humour) that, if it ſhould miſs of Recompence and Applauſe at preſent; yet ſhall its Deſerts be one Day extolled by Saints and Angels, be crowned with Triumphs, and proclaimed with the public Encomium of a whole World met together in Judgment. And (which is of more Worth than all the reſt) they ſhall have the Approbation of that Lord and Judge, who never fails to make them large Amends, who prefer his Honour before their own, and love and ſerve him from a Principle of Truth and Sincerity. In which, and in all other Inſtances of unaffected Piety and Worth, God give us Grace to follow the Example of his bleſſed Son Chriſt Jeſus; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour, and Glory, and Praiſe, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Thirteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

1 *Cor.* xv. 10. ALmighty and merciful God, of whoſe only Gift it cometh, that thy faithful People do unto thee true and laudable Service; grant, we beſeech thee, that we may ſo faithfully ſerve thee in this Life; that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly Promiſes, thro' the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The

The EPISTLE.

Gal. iii. 16.

16. *TO Abraham and his Seed were the Promiſes made. He ſaith not: And to Seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Chriſt.*

PARAPHRASE.

16. The Promiſes of Juſtification and Eternal Life were made to *Abraham* and his Seed: reſtraining thus the Benefits accruing by thoſe Promiſes, to the One choſen Seed in particular, in whom all Nations ſhould be bleſſed. And this is Chriſt, and no other.

17. *And this I ſay, that the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the Law which was four hundred and thirty Years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the Promiſe of none Effect.*

17. Hence then I argue, that God, who had obliged himſelf by a Covenant made with *Abraham*, could not intend to evacuate that Promiſe, by introducing a Law by *Moſes*; which did not take Place till ſeveral hundred Years after the Promiſe had been in force.

18. *For if the Inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of Promiſe: but God gave it to Abraham by Promiſe.*

18. Either then the Inheritance (that is, Eternal Life) muſt belong to good Men by virtue of the Law, or by virtue of the Promiſe antecedent to the Law. If by virtue of the Law, then the Promiſe hath nothing to do with it. But this cannot be, becauſe it expreſsly contradicts the Account given of it in Scripture; which poſitively affirms, that *Abraham* was entitled to it by virtue of God's Promiſe to Him.

19. *Wherefore then ſerveth the Law? it was added becauſe of Tranſgreſſion, till the Seed ſhould come, to whom the Promiſe was made; and it was ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator.*

19. To this you will poſſibly reply, that if it was given by the Promiſe, then the Law was to no Purpoſe. I anſwer, Not ſo neither. The Law was inſtituted afterwards, for wiſe and weighty Reaſons. The Ceremonial Law in particular, conſiſting of Sacrifices, *&c.* was given to contain the *Iſraelites* in their Duty, by reſtraining thoſe Rites to the one true God, which they would otherwiſe have converted to the Worſhip of falſe Gods; and ſo to correct their Proneneſs to Idolatry which a long Converſation in *Egypt* had diſpoſed them to; and which they had given a fatal Experiment of, in the Sin of their Golden Calf. After which it was, and not till then, that the Ritual Law was impoſed upon them. And therefore this Law was to take Place till the coming of Chriſt, the promiſed

miſed Seed: but then to determine. Becauſe the clearer Knowledge of God by the Goſpel ſhould then remove the Danger that occaſioned it; and ſo the Promiſe would ſtand without it, as it had done before. This Law was likewiſe promulged by Angels; and ſent to the People by the Hand of *Moſes*, who ſuſtained the Character of a Mediator between God and the People.

20. Now the very Office of a Mediator implies, not only two Parties contracting, but ſome Difference to be made between the two Parties. And therefore it is obſervable, that the Law was not given immediately to the People, as the Promiſe was given immediately by God to *Abraham* his Friend. Which Difference could not proceed from any Change in God, who is always the ſame; but from the Men, who had provoked him to treat them in another Manner.

20. *Now a Mediator is not a Mediator of one; but God is one.*

Bp. *Bull, Grot. Vorſt.*

Others Thus. Now *Moſes* was a Mediator, but for one Part of *Abraham*'s Seed (the *Iſraelites* only;) but God is but one, and ſo the God of all his Seed in common; all that ſhould be juſtified like that Father of all the Faithful. Dr. *Hammond* puts theſe Words in the Nature of an Objection: urged by the Adverſary, to prove that this Mediatorſhip implied a Covenant, ſufficient to juſtify Men, and neceſſary to be obſerved for that Purpoſe.

Dr. *Whitby.*

21. The Promiſe then and the Law conſiſt very well together: The former had not been neceſſary indeed, if Men could have attained to Righteouſneſs by virtue of the Law: For then the Law might have ſuperſeded the Promiſe; becauſe whatever juſtifies, entitles to eternal Life. But the Law quite contrary leaves Men obnoxious to Death; and we muſt by no Means imagine, that God intended to leave us in this miſerable Condition, as he muſt have done, if the Law had diſannulled his Promiſe made to *Abraham*.

21. *Is the Law then againſt the Promiſes of God? God forbid: for if there had been a Law given which could have given Life, verily Righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the Law.*

22. So that the Scripture, when declaring all to be Sinners, implies, that Faith in *Abraham*'s promiſed Seed is the Means whereby all muſt be juſtified. And conſequently 'tis to the Promiſe, and not to the Law, that we owe our Salvation and eternal Inheritance.

22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promiſe by Faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.*

COMMENT.

THE Circumſtances of the Chriſtian Church in *Galatia*, at the Time of writing this Epiſtle, will give us ſome Light into the true Import and Deſign of St. *Paul*'s Argument, in the Words now under Conſideration. Now, from what had gone before in this and the two other Chapters, it appears, that, after their Converſion to the true Faith, ſome ſeducing Teachers had preached up the Neceſſity of obſerving the Moſaical Law, in order to Salvation. The Apoſtle's Intent was, to confute and root out this dangerous Error; as continuing to lay upon Believers a heavy and unprofitable *Yoke of Bondage, from which Chriſt had ſet them free.* This he attempts as from other Arguments, ſo here particularly, from that Incapacity the Law was under, for doing them any Service, towards obtaining Remiſſion of their Sins, and eternal Life. The Former he expreſſes by *Righteouſneſs*, the Latter by the *Inheritance*. The Latter, he urges, was a Bleſſing, which God had covenanted for; not by the Contract made with his People at Mount *Sinai*, where the Law was given; but with the Father of that People, many hundred Years before, when promiſing, that in *his Seed all Nations ſhould be bleſſed*. The Former, he contends, is therefore to be attained by the ſame Means, and ſtand ſuſpended on the ſame Condition ſtill, as it was imparted to *Abraham*, at the making of that Promiſe. So that they, who are bleſſed with faithful *Abraham*, muſt be bleſſed, as he was, by Faith; not by the Works of the Law, which he neither was nor could be; becauſe juſtified four hundred and thirty Years, before that Law was given.

Chap. v. 1.

Ver. 21.

Ver. 18.

Ver. 16, &c.

Ver. 17.

This ſeems to be the Thread and Strength of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning. In treating whereof I ſhall obſerve the following Method.

1. *Firſt*, I will ſhew what is meant here by Juſtification of Righteouſneſs, and what by Life and Inheritance.

2. *Secondly*, What by *Faith*, which St. *Paul* aſſerts to be the Condition of obtaining theſe. And,

3. *Thirdly*, I will produce ſome Arguments for the Inſufficiency of the *Jewiſh* Law in this Matter.

1. I begin with explaining the Apoſtle's Senſe of Juſtification or Righteouſneſs, and alſo of Life or Inheritance, in this Place.

To *juſtify* is a Term, properly belonging to Proceſſes and Courts of Law, and ſet in direct Oppoſition to *Condemnation*. Now this, when done by God the righteous Judge, muſt neceſſarily proceed upon one of theſe *Two* Grounds. Either, *Firſt*, that the Party ſo juſtified is altogether Innocent, and ſtrictly chargeable with no Guilt at all: Or elſe, *Secondly*, that whatſoever Sins he hath formerly committed, they are entirely pardoned and paſſed by, and can no more riſe up in Judgment againſt him, than if they had never been committed at all. This Perſon therefore, as to all Acts antecedent to the Time of ſuch Juſtification, though not actually in himſelf, is yet, in the Eye of the Law, and by the forgiving Mercy of the Law-maker, and to all Intents and Purpoſes of eſcaping the Puniſhments awarded to ſuch former Tranſgreſſions, a Righteous Perſon.

Matt. xii. 27. Rom. viii. 33, 34. and Ch. v. 9.

The Former of theſe is a Felicity, which never did, or can belong to any mere Man. For (as this and ſundry other Paſſages declare) *the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin*; and ſo had left no Room, no Poſſibility, for avoiding the Condemnation and Puniſhment due to it; except by the *Second* Manner of proceeding, whereby the Guilt already contracted, and the Penalty incurred, are graciouſly

Ver. 22.

ciouſly overlooked and releaſed. This was the Caſe of *Abraham*, who had been educated with his Father *Terah* in the Worſhip of falſe Gods, and continued many Years in the Practice of Idolatry and Superſtition. Yet all this Courſe of Wickedneſs the true God in his abundant Mercy pardoned, took him away from it, favoured him with the Knowledge of himſelf, and of his own mere Grace admitted him into Covenant, and bleſſed him with the Promiſe, mentioned in this Place. In like Manner, they, who are bleſſed and juſtified with *Abraham*, have their paſt Sins forgiven, and are qualified for a Covenant-right to the Promiſes of God, by the removing of that Guilt, which before ſubjected them to the Curſe. And, that this is the true Importance of *Juſtification*, as generally uſed by Saint *Paul*, may appear from the many equivalent Expreſſions, ſuch as *Reconciliation* and *Peace with God*, *Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt*, *covering*, *blotting out*, and *not imputing Sin*, *and the imputing of Righteouſneſs*. All which, but particularly the *Two* laſt, ſpeak the Freedom of that Mercy, which deals with Sinners, as if they had never been ſuch; and make the Act entirely God's, when accepting of that for Righteouſneſs, which no Equity or Deſert could oblige him to accept. From hence it is, that we ſo often ſee the *Grace*, the Goodneſs, the *loving Kindneſs* of God magnified on this Occaſion; and, that this Apoſtle inſiſts upon it, as an Inſtance of all theſe, that God *juſtifieth the Ungodly*, and to *him that worketh not* (that is, hath done nothing at all to deſerve it) *reckons his Faith for Righteouſneſs*.

Joſh. xxiv. 2. Gen. xii. 1.

Rom. v. 9. 2 Cor. v. 19. Col. i. 20, 21. Acts iii. 19. xiii. 38, 39. Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8.

Tit. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Rom. iv. 5.

By *Inheritance* and *Life* here being put as Terms of the ſame Signification, we are plainly given to underſtand, that the Former muſt not be reſtrained to *Canaan only*, (which was therefore called the *Land of Promiſe*,

Promiſe, becauſe God engaged to give it to *Abraham* and his Seed for a Poſſeſſion) but that ſomewhat better was included in it: Even that Immortality, and bliſsful Region, which they, who are freed from the Curſe and Puniſhment of Sin, have a right to expect and to dwell in. This is ſtiled in the *New Teſtament* the *Inheritance of the Sanctified*, *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, an *Inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, for ever in the Heavens.* With regard to this, Chriſtians are denominated *Heirs*, *Heirs of God*, *joint Heirs with Chriſt*, *Heirs of Salvation*, *Heirs of Promiſe*, *Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life:* And laſtly, with regard to this it is, that *Abraham* himſelf, when *ſojourning in the Land of Promiſe*, is expreſsly obſerved to have ſuſtained his Pilgrimage, upon ſome better and more diſtant View. *For* (ſays the Apoſtle) *he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God.*

Acts xx. 32. xxvi. 18. Coloſſ. i. 12. 1 Pet. i. 4.

Rom. viii. 17. Heb. i. 14. vi. 17. Jam. ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 7. Tit. iii. 7.

Heb. xi. 9, 10.

From hence it ſeems to be ſufficiently clear, that St. *Paul* by Juſtification means that Abſolution from Guilt, which *Abraham* received at the Time of the Promiſe made to him, when he was reſcued from the Condemnation and Puniſhment of that Idolatry, in which he had lived, before the true God had revealed his Will to him. And that, by Life and Inheritance he does not mean the actual Enjoyment of theſe, but ſuch a Title to them, as Heirs have to Eſtates: Of which they have all the Aſſurance, that a preſumptive or apparent Right in Law can convey, but not a preſent and a full Poſſeſſion. And in proportion, that, with regard to thoſe whom he ſpeaks of as juſtified after *Abraham*'s Example, he deſigns ſuch a *Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt*, as puts them in a Capacity of entering into Covenant and Favour with God, ſuch as is actually conferred, at the Time of covenanting with Him.

Him. To which Purpoſe it is, that he mentions their being *now*, that is, already *juſtified*, and expreſsly declares the Term from whence this Advantage commenced; by ſaying, *and ſuch* (that is, notorious Sinners, unqualified for the Kingdom of God, like the Perſons inſtanced in juſt before) *ſuch were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified:* intimating very plainly, that this Change of Condition was made at their Baptiſm. In like Manner again, they, from the Time of their Adoption, became *Sons*, and *Heirs*, but *Heirs according to Promiſe*; as *Abraham* and his Seed were of the Land of *Canaan*, which God gave them at preſent the Aſſurance of, but not the Poſſeſſion, till more than Four Hundred Years after.

Rom. v. 9.

1 Cor. vi. 11.

Gal. iv. 7.

II. I come now, in the *Second* Place, to conſider the Nature of that *Faith*, which St *Paul* here repreſents, as the Condition of obtaining theſe Privileges. And in this Enquiry alſo, we ſhall beſt be guided by the Inſtance of *Abraham*. Of him it is ſaid, that he *believed God*, and *that was reckoned to him for Righteouſneſs:* Which, by what went before, appears to be a Phraſe, equivalent with ſaying, *by that Faith he was juſtified*. Now Faith in God, in the moſt obvious and natural Senſe, is an Aſſent of the Mind, to the Certainty of ſuch a Being, and to the Truth of that which he reveals. In the former Reſpect it is uſed by the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, *He that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is:* In the latter, when *Abraham* is ſaid to believe the Promiſe of God, referred to in this Place. But when it is farther obſerved, how the Hiſtory acquaints us, that God, at the very Time of making that Promiſe, commanded *Abraham* to forſake his Country and idolatrous Relations, and how ready he ſhewed himſelf to do ſo; this proves the Nature of juſtifying Faith to be ſuch a firm and lively Aſſent to the

Gen. xv. 6.
Rom. iv. 3.

Heb. xi. 6.

the Certainty of that Promiſe, as diſpoſed *Abraham*, in Conſideration of it, to comply with that Command of God, with which it was accompanied.

Thus, by Parity of Reaſon, *Faith in Jeſus Chriſt* is, believing, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God and Saviour of the World; and ſuch a hearty Perſuaſion of this Truth, as, in View of the Benefits derivable from that Character, is determined to enter into Covenant with him, and accept the Condition, on which thoſe Benefits are propoſed. This was the Faith of the Converts made by St. *Peter*'s Sermon on the Day of Pentecoſt. This the Faith of the Eunuch inſtructed by *Philip*; This the Faith of *Cornelius* and his Company; This the Faith of St. *Paul*'s Jailor and his Family; This, generally ſpeaking, is the *Faith*, to which Juſtification, in the Senſe already enlarged upon, is attributed as its conditional Cauſe; this we find diſtinguiſhed from, and oppoſed to, Works and the Law, in regard of its being followed by that beneficial Effect, which they were in no Capacity of producing. For ſuch is manifeſtly St. *Paul*'s Meaning, (as in the *twenty-firſt* and *ſecond* of this Chapter, and infinite other Texts of like Importance, ſo particularly) in thoſe Words to the Men of *Antioch*; *Be it known unto you therefore, that through this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveneſs of Sins; and by him all that believe are juſtified from all Things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes.*

Acts ii. 37, 38.
—viii. 36, 37.
—x. 45—48.
—xvi. 31—33.
—xiii. 38, 39.

III. This Aſſertion of St. *Paul* brings me very naturally to my *Third* Head: Which is intended to prove the Law inſufficient, for conveying the Benefits, here aſcribed to Faith; that is, Juſtification and eternal Life. And, the Proof of this will reſt upon two Arguments. *Firſt*, That the Law no where covenants for Remiſſion of Sin, and clearing the Conſcience of Guilt. *Secondly*, That the Promiſes, made to encou-

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rage Men in their Obedience, are conceived in such Terms, as extend to temporal Blessings only.

1. The Law no where covenants for Forgiveness of Sins, or absolving the Conscience from Guilt. By the Law may be understood, either the Moral, or the Ceremonial. The Moral is contained in the *Ten Commandments* delivered on Mount *Sinai*; the Tenour whereof is plainly no more, than the enjoining of Precepts to be punctually observed; but without any the least Intimation of Pardon, or gracious Allowance, to them, who either wilfully, or through Infirmity and Surprize, should transgress or neglect their Duty in any Point. And yet the Condition of the Persons under it was so far from capable of an unsinning Obedience, that the Holy Men of those Times frequently express their Sense of it. Thus *Joshua*, *Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your Transgressions, nor your Sins.* Josh. xxiv. 19. Thus *David*, *There is none good, no not one; they are all gone out of the Way; they are all become unprofitable: If God should be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who might* (that is, none could) *abide it?* Psal. xiv. 3. — cxxx. 3. There are many other Passages to the same Purpose; enough to bear St. *Paul* out, in declaring, that he said no other Things, than such as *Moses* and the Prophets had spoken; when affirming *all the World to have become guilty before God; and, that by the Deeds of the Law no Flesh shall be justified in his Sight.* Psal. cxliii. 2. Rom. iii. 19, 20.

The Ceremonial Law indeed consisted of many Sacrifices and Purifications; but to what Degree of Efficacy these extended, is exceeding plain, from the Account of their respective Appointments. The general End whereof was to qualify Men for Access to God in the Place of his solemn Worship; and for holding the Privileges of an external Communion, with Him, and with their Brethren of the Commonwealth of *Israel*.

But as to ſatisfying for, or aboliſhing of Guilt, or pacifying the Wrath of God againſt the Sinner; the Apoſtle hath, by ſeveral unanſwerable Arguments, proved them to be altogether uſeleſs and unprofitable. He ſhews it, from the Nature of the Services themſelves; which, in Correſpondence to the Benefits procured by them, is purely external. From whence he calls them *Carnal Ordinances*, ſuch as ſerve only to *the purifying of the Fleſh*; and argues, that for *purging the Conſcience from dead Works*, a much more powerful Cleanſing, even an Offering through *the Spirit*, was *neceſſary*. He ſhews it, from the frequent Repetition of them; in regard they would certainly have *ceaſed to be offered*, had they made *the Comers thereunto ſo purged and perfect* as to leave behind no Conſciouſneſs of Sin. He proves it from the Promiſe of a Prieſthood, and a Sacrifice, different from that of *Aaron*; which implies the Imperfection of all Atonements, ſuppoſed to be made by the former: And therefore, that both the Order, and the Law to which it miniſtred, is *changed for the Weakneſs and Unprofitableneſs thereof*. He proves it once more, by the Promiſe of another Covenant; expreſsly ſaid to differ from that in *Horeb*; and that, as upon other Accounts, ſo particularly upon this, that *God would be merciful to their Unrighteouſneſs, and would remember their Sins and Iniquities no more*. Than the mention of which, as a ſpecial Privilege belonging to this ſubſequent Covenant, nothing could poſſibly be more abſurd; if we ſuppoſe that Covenant in *Horeb*, to have already made effectual Proviſion for the Pardon of Sin.

Heb. ix. 10, 13, 14.

Heb. x. 1, 2.

Heb. vii. 11, 12, 18.

Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 34.

Heb. viii. 9, 12.

— x. 16, 17.

Now, if the Law be inſufficient to juſtify, it muſt needs be ſo, for conveying a Title to the Inheritance, and the Life, meant in the Scripture before us. For nothing is more evident, than, that all Right to theſe

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is forfeited by Sin, and conſequently is not capable of being reſtored, by any Diſpenſation, which cannot take away the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin. But this is farther evident from the Temper and Deſign of the Law itſelf. For the Moral Law threatened temporal Puniſhment only. Upon ſome Tranſgreſſions, as that of Idolatry in particular, it inflicted Death, and denounced a Succeſſion of Judgments *unto the third and fourth Generation.* For a Reward of Obedience, *as in the Fifth Commandment*, it promiſes a long and proſperous Enjoyment of the Land, which God had given to the *Iſraelites.* And generally, it appoints ſome particular bodily Suffering, for the Offences reducible to each of its Commands. The Ceremonial Law, in like manner, confines its Rewards and Puniſhments, to the Bleſſings and Miſeries of the preſent Life. This is clear, from innumerable Teſtimonies in the Books of *Moſes*, but eſpecially from the *twenty ſixth* Chapter of *Leviticus*, and the *twenty eighth* of *Deuteronomy*. In all theſe, particular Regard was had, to the Land of *Canaan*, out of which many Precepts of the Law were plainly impracticable; to the Temper and Circumſtances of that People; and to the Prevention of thoſe heatheniſh and abominable Superſtitions, to which, by their preſent Degeneracy, they were then ſtrongly addicted. Theſe all conſpired to render a Ritual and Laborious Worſhip, enforced by worldly Conſiderations, neceſſary, to contain, and as it were bridle up, a Nation, who were ſunk beneath that manly and generous Frame of Spirit, which is requiſite, in order to reliſh, and be effectually wrought upon by the Views of, a future and far diſtant Recompence. And upon this Ground it is (as I have formerly explained at large) that St. *Paul*'s Compariſon of the *Heir under Age*, and the allegorical Importance of the *two Covenants*, in the *fourth* of this Epiſtle, manifeſtly proceed.

Deut. xiii.

Exod. xx. 5.

See Epiſt. S. aft. Chriſtm. *and* 4 *S. in* Lent.

Thus much may ſuffice for the *Three* Heads I propoſed to ſpeak to. But the Subject here treated of ought by no Means to be diſmiſſed, without obſerving to you *Three* very conſiderable Uſes proper to be made of it. As,

1. *Firſt*, By the Account given here of Juſtification, we ſhall find it no hard Matter to reconcile this and other Scriptures which attribute this Privilege entirely to Faith; with ſome, and particularly with that famous one of St. *James*, which deny, that a *Man is juſtified by Faith without Works*. For indeed the Word, in the Places, ſo ſeemingly different, is certainly uſed in two different Senſes; and all the Difficulty of reconciling them ariſes, from the want of attending to this Obſervation, and ſo applying it, in one and the ſame Senſe. The Juſtification, aſcribed by St. *Paul* to Faith without Works, is Abſolution from Sins, which were committed by Men, before they believe in Chriſt; and the not having thoſe Sins imputed, but being admitted to Peace and Favour with God, upon Entrance into Covenant with him. Now this cannot poſſibly be owing to Good Works; becauſe, till intereſted in Chriſt, and aſſiſted by his Grace, Men can have no ſuch Works, to owe them to. Upon which Account St *Paul* ſtiles converted Believers, *God's Workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus to Good Works*. Inſinuating by that Metaphor, that Men in this Reſpect had no Being at all, before God formed them into that new Creature: And, that the Spiritual is, as the Natural Man was, produced by His Almighty Power, out of Principles of themſelves incapable of producing it.

Jam. ii. 14, &c.

Eph. ii. 10.

But this Word hath alſo another Meaning in Scripture; whereby is ſignified the full and final Juſtification of Good Men, in their laſt Great Account. Thus we find it uſed by our Bleſſed Saviour, *I ſay unto you, that every idle Word, that Men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give Account thereof in*

Matth. xii. 36, 37.

in the Day of Judgment; *For by thy Words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy Words thou ſhalt be condemned.* Thus even by St. *Paul* himſelf, *not the Hearers of the Law are juſt before God, but the Doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified.*—*In the Day when God ſhall judge the Secrets of Men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my Goſpel.* For, that this is the Time and Matter there referred to, is manifeſt from another *Text* of like Importance concerning his own Caſe. *I know nothing by myſelf, Yet am I not hereby juſtified; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the Counſels of the Hearts; and then ſhall every Man have Praiſe of God.* Thus alſo St. *James* uſed it in his *Second* Chapter: As is abundantly manifeſt from making this Expreſſion equivalent to that of final Salvation. For ſo he does, by ſaying, *What doth it profit, if a Man ſay he hath Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith ſave him?* And again, *Ye ſee, how that by Works a Man is juſtified, and not by Faith only.* This is manifeſt, *Secondly*, by the Nature and Purpoſe of the Works he mentions. They are ſuch, as the Man's Faith is to be ſhewn by, and conſequently they muſt be ſubſequent to that Faith, of which they are the Fruits and Evidences. Now theſe may be aſſiſting to our full and final Juſtification; but they cannot be ſo, to that Juſtification which admits to a Covenant State, at which Time it hath been ſhewed, that a Man can have no ſuch Works at all: And conſequently, theſe cannot be the ſame Works, with thoſe denied by St. *Paul* to contribute any Thing to the *juſtifying* of *the Ungodly*. This is manifeſt again, *Thirdly*, by the different Uſe theſe two Apoſtles make, of the Inſtance of *Abraham*. He, in St. *Paul*'s Senſe, was *juſtified* at the Time of believing the Promiſe made by God to

Rom. ii. 13, 16.

1 Cor. iv. 4, 5.

Ver. 14. *compared with* Ver. 24.

Ver. 18.

Rom. iv.

him, and before he had any Works to recommend him; but he was juſtified, according to St. *James*'s Senſe, *after* and by *offering up his Son Iſaac*. And conſequently, that *Juſtification* cannot be the ſame, which is aſcribed to Cauſes ſo different, and made to commence from Periods ſo diſtant. For *Abraham* was juſtified, abſolved from paſt Sins, bleſſed with the Promiſe, and had the Belief of that Promiſe reckoned to him for Righteouſneſs, fifty Years at leaſt before that Action, by which St. *James* pronounces him juſtified; and a hundred Years before his own Death, till which Time no Man can be fully and finally juſtified. Hence it appears, that, in their Arguments and Accounts concerning this Matter, the two Apoſtles are at perfectly good Agreement; that each have Authorities from other Parts of Scripture, for the Meanings put by them upon this Word reſpectively; that both cannot poſſibly intend the ſame Thing; and, that many may be *juſtified* in the one of theſe Meanings, who are not like ever to be ſo in the other; becauſe no Man is *juſtified*, in St. *Paul*'s Senſe, with Works; and no Man is *juſtified*, in St. *James*'s Senſe, without them.

Jam. ii. 21.

Uſſer. Annal. Patrick *on* Gen. xxii.

II. *Secondly*, Hence we may learn, how widely, how dangerouſly indeed, thoſe Men miſtake the Matter; who, from this and other like Paſſages of Scripture, teach Men to reſt upon Faith alone, and deny the Neceſſity of good Works in order to Salvation. The fundamental Error of this Doctrine ſeems to ſpring from hence; that they who advance it, aſcribe to that Faith, which St. *James* declares inſufficient, all the glorious Effects, attributed to the Faith mentioned and magnified by St. *Paul:* and on the other Hand, they apply all the diſparaging Reflections, which are caſt upon the Works declared of no Effect to this Purpoſe by St. *Paul*, to the Works, which we find ſo peremptorily required by St. *James*. Whereas in truth, neither is the Faith, nor are the Works, intended by theſe

theſe two Apoſtles, the ſame. For the Faith in St. *Paul*, is that Belief, which is antecedent to, or concomitant with, our firſt Entrance into the Chriſtian Covenant. And this, as it diſpoſes us to contract for, ſo it is preſumed to be (as in all Reaſon it muſt be) lively and ſtrong enough, to prevail for a ſincere and conſtant Compliance with all thoſe Duties, in the Obſervance whereof the making good our Part of the Contract conſiſts. And this is the Reaſon, why it is ſo highly commended. But the Faith in St. *James*, is a bare ſpeculative Aſſent to the Truth of the Chriſtian Revelation, without any Effect or Influence at all, upon our Hearts and Lives: And this is the Reaſon of its being ſo highly condemned, called a *dead* Faith, and reſembled to the *Belief of Devils*. Again, the Works, to which St. *Paul* allows ſo mean a Character, are thoſe of the Moral or Ritual Law, done upon Principles of mere Reaſon and Nature; ſuch as are done by our own Strength, or ſuch as preſume upon a Reward due to our own Deſert; but always done, before the Belief and embracing of the Chriſtian Religion: But now the Works, inſiſted on as neceſſary by St. *James*, are ſubſequent to our Chriſtianity; Evidences of the Sincerity and Vigour of that Faith, which made us Chriſtians; performed by the Aſſiſtances of that Spirit, which was beſtowed on us, when we became ſuch; and done, in an humble Confidence of being graciouſly accepted, not for their own, but for *Chriſt Jeſus* his ſake. And of theſe St. *Paul* ſpeaks no leſs glorioufly, than St. *James*. In regard to theſe it is, that we find him, in the *Fifth* of this Epiſtle, laying down a Catalogue of the *Fruits of the Spirit*; declaring, that the only Thing that can avail Chriſtians is *Faith which worketh by Love*. A Phraſe, explained again in this very Epiſtle, by that of a *New Creature*; urging,

Jam. ii. 14, 17, 24, 26.

Chap. v. 22, 23.

— v. 6.

Chap. vi. 15. that *the End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good*
1 Tim. i. 5. *Conſcience, and Faith unfeigned:* To the ſame Effect he mentions *the Law of Faith,*
Rom. iii. 27. xvi. 26. *the Obedience of Faith, the good Fight of*
1 Tim. vi. 12. *Faith.* He joins together the *Work of*
1 Theſſ. i. 3. *Faith*, and *Labour of Love*, and *Patience of Hope.* He charges his Son *Timothy, to follow after Righteouſneſs, Godlineſs,*
1 Tim. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 22. *Faith, Love, Patience, Meekneſs: Peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart.* And, to name no more, ſo far is he from aſcribing the whole of a Chriſtian's Duty or Salvation, to this Grace alone after his Converſion; as to ſay, that the *whole Law is compre-*
Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. *hended and fulfilled in Love*, and that *now*
Gal. v. 14. *abide theſe three, Faith, Hope, and Charity,*
1 Cor. xiii. 13. *but the greateſt of theſe is Charity.* I forbear more Teſtimonies of this Kind; and will only remark, concerning theſe already produced, that, as I have confined myſelf in the Choice of them, to the Writings of St. *Paul*; ſo great a Part are, and a vaſt Number more might be, taken out of thoſe very Epiſtles, where the main Strength of the Patrons for a naked and unfruitful Faith is ſuppoſed to lie. In ſhort, no Man is more affectionate in preſſing a good Life, than this Apoſtle; and, as he extols Faith and vilifies Works, before Converſion and the Covenant, to the laſt Degree: (in which he is not contradicted at all by St. *James*) So, where he ſpeaks of Faith; after the Covenant ſtruck, and in order to the perfecting of a Chriſtian's Salvation, he plainly includes the Effect in the Cauſe; and intends the ſelf-ſame Thing by Faith alone, that St. *James* means by Faith and Works both.

3. From what hath been ſaid concerning the Inſufficiency of the Law, to confer Juſtification and Eternal Life,

Life, we may take Occaſion to obſerve; what Intimations of theſe Mercies were given, and whence they were derived, both before, and under, the Law. That ſuch Intimations there were, not only from Nature, but alſo from Reaſon confirmed by Revelation, is plain from the Paſſage now under Debate; which affirms them to have been promiſed to *Abraham*, ſome Centuries of Years before the Law. And, not to multiply Proofs in ſo clear a Caſe, the *Eleventh* to the *Hebrews* is nothing elſe, but a long Liſt of Good Men, who firmly believed them, and were ſupported under all their Difficulties by an aſſured Expectation of them. So that we have Need only to enquire, what Foundation they had for ſuch Dependence and Belief.

Now for this Purpoſe we are to conſider, that, Sin being the only Cauſe of Miſery and Death, whereſoever God promiſes a Redeemer, he promiſes Remiſſion of Sins; and whereſoever Remiſſion of Sins is promiſed, there is alſo virtually, and by Conſequence, promiſed a future State of Immortality. In this Reſpect then the Aſſurances of that *Life* and *Inheritance* meant here, immediately ſucceed to the Sin of our firſt Parents in Paradiſe.

Thoſe Aſſurances were again renewed to the Patriarchs; not only in this Paſſage cited by St. *Paul*, but in that other to *Moſes* out of the Buſh. Where God called himſelf the God of *Abraham* and of *Iſaac* and of *Jacob*; Perſons, though long ſince in their Graves, yet with regard to Him ſtill living. And the Force of this Argument there is no room to doubt, after our Bleſſed Lord himſelf hath made Uſe of it, to confute the Sadducees Error, and to prove a Reſurrection. Exod. iii. Matth. xxii.

But to conclude; The Moſaical Law abounded with Intimations of this Nature. Its every Sacrifice of Propitiation figured the Death of that *Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World.* Its Temporal Promiſes

Heb. iv. miſes of a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, alluded to the Heavenly *Canaan*;
Heb. xii. The Ordinances, which then kept truly good Men in Communion with God and his People upon Earth, made them myſtical Members of Chriſt, and joined them to the Aſſembly of Saints in Heaven.

Epiſt. 12 *Sund. after* Trin. But ſtill (as I lately obſerved) we muſt continually make a Difference, between their having theſe Privileges *under* the Law, and having them, *by* the Law. For They belonged to the Law no otherwiſe, than as *that* included and prefigured the Goſpel. This is that *better Covenant*, which *brought in a better Hope*, and
Heb. vii. 19. — viii. 6. *was eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes.* This was concurrent with, and antecedent to
Acts iv. 12. the Law, nor *was there ever any other Name, whereby Men could be ſaved, but only the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* He was the End, the Sum of the Law; the Subſtance of every Promiſe; the Life of every Ordinance; for all without Him was but a Dead Letter. It is therefore to the Law, taken apart from and excluſive of Him, that the many *Terms* of Diminution and Reproach in the *New Teſtament*, are to be applied. It is to the ſame Law, implying, repreſenting, exhibiting, and leading to Him, (and to the Law purely as ſuch) that any of the Commendations given to it, are due. But yet This, even in its higheſt and beſt Capacity, comes infinitely ſhort of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation. For now the Shadows are diſpelled, the Veils laid aſide; the true Sacrifice for Sin offered, *Death aboliſhed by*
2 Tim. i. 10. *Jeſus Chriſt, and Life and Immortality brought to Light through the Goſpel.* For which all Honour and Glory, Thankſgiving and Praiſe, be to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Thirteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke x. 23.

23. *BLeſſed are the Eyes which ſee the Things that ye ſee.*

24. *For I tell you, That many Prophets and Kings have deſired to ſee thoſe Things that ye ſee, and have not ſeen them; and to hear thoſe Things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

PARAPHRASE.

23, 24. The Happineſs that ye have in ſeeing the Miracles, converſing with the Perſon of the Meſſiah, and hearing the Myſteries of his Goſpel unfolded, hath been the Wiſh of many excellent Perſons; But is a Bleſſing, in the Enjoyment whereof ye excel the greateſt and the beſt Men, that ever went before you.

25. *And behold a certain Lawyer ſtood up, and tempted him, ſaying, Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal Life?*

26. *And he ſaid unto him, What is written in the Law? how readeſt thou?*

27. *And he anſwering, ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul; and with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind; and thy Neighbour as thyſelf.*

28. *And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt anſwered right: this do, and thou ſhalt live.*

29. *But he, willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my Neighbour?*

29. This Doctor of the Law deſirous to be thought one that had done all this; and grounding that Confidence upon a Tradition, that thoſe of their own Nation alone had a Title to his Love, puts a ſecond Queſtion, how far the true Import of the Word Neighbour extends.

30. *And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, A certain Man went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell among Thieves, which ſtripped him of his Raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

30. To this Jeſus made no direct Anſwer, but leaves him to collect it from the following Parable of a Man travelling in a Road, grievouſly infeſted with Robbers, as that between *Jeruſalem* and *Jericho* was, for St. *Jerom* takes Notice of a Place in this Road called *Adomim*, that is, *red* or *bloody*, from the many Outrages and Murders committed there, and mentions a Fort built there, in which Soldiers were placed, to guard the Ways and ſuccour the Paſſengers.

De Loc. Hebr. Pag. 5. Edit. Froben.

31. *And by Chance there came down a certain Prieſt that Way; and when he ſaw him, he paſſed by on the other Side.*

32. *And likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the Place, came and looked on him, and paſſed by on the other Side.*

33. *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he ſaw him, he had compaſſion on him,*

34. *And went to him, and bound up his Wounds, pouring in Oil and Wine, and ſet him on his own Beaſt, and brought him to an Inn, and took care of him.*

35. *And on the Morrow when he departed, he took out two Pence, and gave them to the Hoſt, and ſaid unto him, Take care of him; and whatſoever thou ſpendeſt more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

36. Judge now from hence, which of theſe did the Neighbour's Part.

36. *Which now of theſe three thinkeſt thou was Neighbour to him that fell among the Thieves?*

37. Then doſt thou alſo fulfil this Command, when thou ſheweſt Mercy to any diſtreſſed Perſon, whoſoever he be that ſtands in Need of it: And makeſt no Difficulty to uſe even a Samaritan, as kindly as this Samaritan uſed that Jew.

37. *And he ſaid, He that ſhewed Mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go and do thou likewiſe.*

COMMENT.

Epiſt. Advent Sunday. Vol. I. p. 5.

TWO very material Points, relating to the Duty of Love to our Neighbour, were long ſince reſerved to be treated of in this Place. The *Firſt* concerns the Object of that Love; or the Perſons, to whom it ought to extend. The *Second*, The Meaſure and Degree of this Love, and the Inſtances whereby it ought to be expreſſed. The Goſpel for this Day miniſters a fit Occaſion for explaining both theſe, which I ſhall do as clearly, and briefly, as I can.

1. The

1. The *First* of these will best be understood, by considering the Manner, in which our Lord chooses to answer that Question at the 29th *Verse*, *Who is my Neighbour?* A Question, as the Paraphrase hinted, which had its chief Foundation in the *Jewish* Schools. Their proud Distinctions and subtle Glosses had narrowed the just Extent of this Word, by confining it to Persons of their own Nation and Religion. For answer therefore; our Lord states the Case of a Jew in Distress, relieved by a Samaritan, after that two of his own Countrymen had neglected him. And then he appeals to the Enquirer's own Sense, which of the *Three* approved himself the distressed Party's Neighbour: Who readily and rightly determined, *He that shewed Mercy on him.* Ver. 36. Ver. 37.

This Account is, no doubt, intended to teach us, that we must by no Means straiten our Bowels, by confining our Notion of Neighbourhood, to a Space so stinted, as our own Kindred, or Friends, or Acquaintance, or our own Country, or our own Persuasion: But that all Mankind, even Strangers, even Enemies, (for I shall prove both these included in the Character of Samaritan) are to be esteemed within the Compass of it. *That* no Man discharges his Duty in this particular, who does not contribute what he can, to the Help of any indigent forlorn Creature. *That* Human Nature and Necessity are always good *Titles* to Pity and Assistance; and, that no other Consideration is sufficient to acquit our Cruelty, when we refuse it; be the Party at never so great a Distance from, or Difference with us; be he utterly unknown to us, or unheard of by us.

All these Conclusions result from the Character of a Samaritan. Of the Enmity and Aversion between which People and the Jews, the Scriptures have given us frequent Intimations. Thus the Woman at *Jacob's*

Well ſtood aſtoniſhed, at our Saviour's entering into Converſation with, or deſiring any Courteſy of Her: *How is it* (ſaid ſhe) *that thou, being a Jew, aſkeſt Drink of me, who am a Woman of Samaria?* And thus, on the other hand, our Lord could not, in his Paſſage through this Country, obtain any Reception, *becauſe his Face was as though he would go to Jeruſalem.* Now though this Difference itſelf be very notorious; yet, by reaſon the Cauſes of it are not ſo commonly known, and becauſe it may be of ſome Service to the Argument I am upon, that they ſhould be very well known; I will endeavour to give an Account of them, in as few Words as the Matter will allow.

John iv. 9.

Luke ix. 53.

The firſt Breach taken Notice of, we find in the Book of *Kings*, when the *Ten Tribes* withdrew their Allegiance from *Rehoboam* and the Houſe of *David*, and erected a Kingdom diſtinct from *Judah* and *Benjamin.* This Revolt *Jeroboam* contrived to perpetuate, by making *Samaria* their Capital City, and ſetting up Idols in *Bethel* and *Dan*; leſt the People's Attendance upon the Exerciſes of Religion, enjoined to be performed at *Jeruſalem*, ſhould be inſtrumental in reviving their Commerce with *Judah*, and by Degrees reduce and unite them again. That politic Corruption of their Worſhip grew ſo general, and ſo provoking to Almighty God; that he permitted *Salmaneſſer* King of *Aſſyria* to ſubdue and carry them away Captive. In the Place of whom were tranſplanted thither a Colony of Idolaters, who, with the Remnant left behind, made up a ſtrange Confuſion both of Nations and Religions. So that the Jews, who ſtill kept conſtant to the Profeſſion and Service of the One true God, had now little or no Communication with them.

1 Kings xii.

2 Kings xvii.

That Diſtance grew afterwards into Enmity and open

open Oppoſition. For, after the Return from *Babylon*, theſe idolatrous *Samaritans* laboured by all manner of Means, to obſtruct the building of the *Second Temple*; and zealouſly employed their Intereſt in the Kings of *Perſia*, to diſcountenance the Attempt. But the greateſt and moſt irreconcileable Part of the Quarrel followed after this. For every Man being, after the Captivity, obliged to part with their ſtrange Wives; it happened, that *Manaſſes*, Brother to the High Prieſt, had married the Daughter of *Sanballat* the *Honorite*, a famous bitter Enemy to the *Jews*, and was excommunicated, for refuſing to put her from him. When this Man was diſpoſed to ſubmit for the Sake of preſerving his Reputation and Dignity with the *Jews*; his Father-in-law propoſed to make him amends, by building a *Temple* on Mount *Gerizim*, of which he ſhould be ſupreme, independent upon, and equal to, the High-Prieſt at *Jeruſalem*. This was accordingly done, and made the Schiſm incurable. The *Samaritans* held *their Temple* in Veneration, equal to that which was paid by the *Jews* to *theirs*: *Our Fathers* (ſays the Woman of *Samaria* to our Bleſſed Saviour) *worſhipped in this Mountain, and ye ſay, that in Jeruſalem is the Place where Men ought to worſhip*. Hither many Malecontents reſorted, much People were drawn off, and all Sorts of ſcandalous and diſaffected Perſons came to *Manaſſes*, as to a common Sanctuary. This Difference therefore was principally upon a Religious Account: A Provocation and Affront to God, which the *Jews* eſteemed themſelves in Duty bound to reſent, and thought no Expreſſions of Indignation and Abhorrence could be too great. So that there was not upon Earth with *them*, a Creature more deteſted than a *Samaritan*. They loaded theſe Separatiſts with Execration; *they* refuſed all Dealings with them in the com-

Ezra iv.

Nehem. vi.

Joſeph. Antiq. l. xi.

Ezra x. Nehem. xiii. 23—28.

Joſeph. Antiq. l. xi. cap. viii.

John iv. 20.

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mon Buſineſs of Life; *they* would not allow them the uſual Civilities to Strangers; nor do for them any of thoſe Offices of Humanity, which no one Man would think much to do for any other Man. And the *Samaritans* (like the Generality of thoſe, at whom the Guilt of Separation lies) were, on their Part, no whit behind-hand in Perverſeneſs and Spight. The Inſtance therefore of Charity here deſcribed, was ſuch, as, all Circumſtances conſidered, could leaſt be expected. So that this Example, (when drawn into a Rule, and made, as here it is, a Pattern for others to copy after) does manifeſtly import, that let a Perſon in Neceſſity and Affliction be who or what he will; ſtill he is a proper Object of our Charity; and we are bound to be touched with, and to have a very tender Compaſſion for, his Caſe.

Ver. 37.

II. But, *Secondly*, A due Conſideration of the Inſtance now before us, would be a good Intimation, how far the *Teſtimonies* of our Kindneſs to ſuch Perſons ought to extend. The cheapeſt and eaſieſt Degree of Love to our Neighbour, that which no Man's Circumſtances render him incapable of, and therefore the leaſt that can poſſibly be due from any Man, is Pity and good Wiſhes: To grieve with the Miſerable, when we ſee their Diſtreſs; and to pray, that Matters may be better with them. This is a good Office, that coſts us nothing; which, one would imagine, ſhould diſpoſe all People to be very free of it. And yet, to the Shame (I will not ſay of the Chriſtian Religion, but) of Human Nature be it ſpoken, too many are defective, even in this Particular. For how great are the Numbers, who have no Bowels, no Feeling at all of the Coldneſs and Nakedneſs, the Hunger and Thirſt, the Sickneſs and Anguiſh, of their ſuffering Brethren? And, which is yet a great deal worſe, if thoſe Brethren happen to be ſuch, whoſe Principles are different, or whoſe Behaviour hath been diſobliging and injurious, how frequent is it, to rejoice and triumph

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in their Calamities, to imitate the Malice of the Devil himſelf; and to think no Muſic comparable to *that*, which the Sighs and Groans of afflicted Enemies make in their Ears? Theſe Wretches cry out with *David*'s Perſecutors, *There, there, ſo would we have it*; and crucify again our Bleſſed Saviour, by inſulting, when they think thoſe Foes, which are Members of his Myſtical Body, ſcourged and forſaken of God. This is really a Quality, ſavouring of Hell, and of thoſe Spirits of Envy that inhabit there: And I would to God, as it is fit for no other, ſo it were to be found in no other Place. However, if it muſt meet with Entertainment upon Earth, let it at leaſt be confined to Heathens and Infidels; but, for Chriſtians, upon any Difference or Grudge, to conceive a wicked Joy at the Miſeries of Fellow-Chriſtians, is certainly moſt monſtrous and abominable.

We will hope then (though God knows it is almoſt againſt Hope) that no Minds ſo invenomed can be found, where the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and his glorious Goſpel, have ſhined. But alas! it is but too evident, that where the Light of theſe is come, the Warmth of them is wanting: That our Hearts, I mean, are ſtill ſo frozen, as with a cold Indifference to behold the Wants and Misfortunes of the Poor and Miſerable. Like the Prieſt and the *Levite* before us, if we do not entertain ourſelves with the ſad Spectacle, yet we can *come to the Place* where the deplorable Object lies, and *look on*, and *paſs by*, without any manner of Impreſſion. Or, if we ſhake our Heads, and appear to lament the Caſe, yet does not this much mend the Matter. For, as St *James* hath argued very juſtly, *If a Brother or a Siſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily Food, and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in Peace, be ye warmed and filled: Notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe Things which are needful to the Body; what doth it profit?* Wiſhes and Words will neither fill nor

Ver. 31, 32.

Jam. ii. 15, 16.

clothe them. And it is plain, that, though we ſhould ſuppoſe the Prieſt and *Levite* to have given thus much, yet neither of them diſcharged the Duty of a Neighbour.

The *Samaritan* therefore, who made good that Character, did not expreſs his Pity in idle and unprofitable Bemoanings, but in active and effectual Relief. He expended his own Proviſions: poured the Oil and Wine bought for his own Uſe, into the bleeding Wounds of the forlorn Stranger: Diſmounted himſelf, and ſet the impotent Wretch upon his own Beaſt: Conveyed him to a Place of Reſt and Refreſhment: furniſhed him with Neceſſaries during their Stay together, and at parting undertook for the Continuance of his Support, and the perfecting of his Recovery. And all this he frankly did; when his own Countrymen, when they, whoſe Profeſſion obliged them more eſpecially to be charitable, had overlooked him, and done nothing at all for him.

This Deportment again inſtructs us, that it is not ſufficient, to have a tender Senſe of Want and Diſtreſs, without expreſſing that Senſe in ſuch Inſtances of Succour, as our own and the Sufferer's Circumſtances ſhall render ſeaſonable and proper: That we ought to be content with ſome Inconvenience, to give ourſelves ſome Trouble, not to grudge ſome Expence, for ſuch a one's Comfort and Relief: That we ſhould not be weary of well-doing, but carry on our Compaſſion and Liberality to Perfection; and not think much to continue our Aſſiſtance, ſo long as there continues to be need of it: That we may not turn a fit Object off, and ſhelter our Inhumanity, under that too common but very frivolous Excuſe, of ſome, who are more nearly allied, or more ſtrongly obliged to ſuch Care than we are, having neglected him. For, what is more abſurd, than to ſuppoſe, that another's Crime can be our Juſtification? A Countryman, an Acquaintance, a near Relation, may be hard-hearted and unnatural:

natural: But, if *they* have not done *their* Part, the Obligation is not leſs, and the Occaſion is greater, for us to do ours. And, though the Party in Affliction be neither Kinſman nor Friend; nay an Heretic, an Heathen, an Enemy though he be; yet is he ſtill in the Goſpel-Senſe *our Neighbour:* And conſequently, it is our Part to contribute all we can, that may be ſerviceable for his Conſolation and Aſſiſtance, his Support under, and his Deliverance out of, his Sufferings and Sorrows.

And *this* is truly and properly to *love our Neighbour as ourſelves.* The meaning of which Command is not, either that we ſhould love any Neighbour with equal Tenderneſs as ourſelves; (for that I conceive is hardly poſſible:) Or that we ſhould love every Neighbour alike: (Which, if we ſuppoſe poſſible, were neither juſt nor natural:) Or that we ſhould do for our Neighbour all that he now does, or that we, if in his Circumſtances, might perhaps wiſh and deſire to be done for ourſelves; (for ſuch Deſires may be irregular; or, if not ſinful, yet unreaſonable.) But it is, to do all that for him, which, were our Caſe his, and his ours, we ſhould in Reaſon and good Conſcience expect, and be glad, to have done to us. And, as the Love a Man bears to himſelf is always ſincere, ſo ſhould the Love to our Neighbour be, in this Reſpect, as that to ourſelves: Not mercenary and deſigning, but diſintereſted and hearty: Intending the Benefit of the Party we expreſs it to: Not indirectly ſeeking our own Profit or Pleaſure: And, as an evident Proof whoſe Good it is we aim at, not balking any proper Expreſſion of it, either to *them*, who have no paſt or perſonal Conſiderations to induce it; or to *them*, from whom we can have no Proſpect or human Poſſibility of a Return to be made for it.

Again; As the Propriety of the Parable here is evident for explaining the Nature and Extent of our Duty; ſo ſhould the Authority of the Perſon pro-

pounding it be, in this above all other Points, reputed an indiſpenſable Engagement upon us. For of that merciful and loving *Jeſus* himſelf this Account is a moſt lively Repreſentation. He was the Good *Samaritan* indeed, who found poor Human Nature wounded and bound, left more than half dead, and ſtript of all its valuable Perfections, by the mercileſs Robber and Adverſary of Souls. His Bowels yearned over our diſtreſſed Condition; and, when neither the *Levitical* Law, nor the Sacrifices offered by *Jewiſh* Prieſts, had (as I have ſhewn on the Epiſtle for this Day) adminiſtered any ſort of Comfort and Relief: He came, a Stranger, from his bliſsful Dwelling; kindly made towards us, bound up our Wounds and Bruiſes, poured out his Soul to the Death, and applied the Sovereign Balſam of his own Blood. He took us up, and removed us away into a more ſaving Diſpenſation; cloathed us with his own Righteouſneſs as with a Robe; and wrought a perfect Cure upon us, at the Expence of many Miracles, and mighty Condeſcenſions, and infinite Hardſhips and Sufferings to himſelf. His Occaſions indeed would not allow him to ſtay with us, till all the Effects of this Goodneſs were accompliſhed; but he hath left us in ſafe Hands, and given Commiſſion for a conſtant Supply of Spiritual Suſtenance and Remedies. When them who diſtribute faithfully, he will certainly, when he comes again, repay; and them, who receive regularly and thankfully, he will as certainly heal, and nouriſh unto Life Eternal.

And ought not, O my Friends, ſuch a Pattern as this, to have the Weight of Ten Thouſand Arguments with us? How can *they* grudge fit Expreſſions of Love to their Brethren in Diſtreſs, who at all remember, what the Son of God, in their utmoſt, their deſperate Extremity, did not eſteem too much to do for *them?* Who, laſtly, can have the Confidence to think himſelf excuſed, toward thoſe of a differing Judgment,

Judgment, or disobliging Behaviour, or most wrongful Malice and Spight: When herein chiefly *God commendeth his Love towards us, that while we were yet Sinners*, the most fatally mistaken, the worst and most disingenuous of his Creatures here below, the bittereſt and most detestable of all Enemies, *Christ died for us?* For which inestimable Benefit and Love, all Honour and Praise, Thanksgiving and Obedience, be unto Him, who left us an Example, that herein we should follow his Steps. Rom. v. 8.

The Fourteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty and everlasting God, give unto us the Increase of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Gal. v. 16.

16, *I Say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the Lust of the Flesh.*

PARAPHRASE.

16. The Advice I give for avoiding the Abuse of your Christian Liberty, and that Strife and Uncharitableness mentioned just before, is, that you would behave yourselves as Men, that make the Gospel their Rule, and are guided by the Spirit of God; which will prevent your being enslaved by the Lusts of the Flesh.

17. *For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the Things that ye would.*

17. For there is a Carnal Principle in us, which opposes the Motions of that Spiritual; and there is a Spiritual One, which opposes the Carnal, and hinders our Compliance with the Motions of that Carnal, notwithstanding we are by Nature inclined to obey them.

18. Now they who have the Grace of the Holy Spirit for their Guidance, which is a Privilege belonging to the Goſpel, are freed from, and above that leſs perfect Diſpenſation of the Law.

18. *But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law.*

19. Now that carnal Principle, when not reſtrained by Grace, (as it could not be by Virtue of the Law, for that conveyed no ſuch Privilege) exerts itſelf in ſuch plainly wicked and abominable Practices as theſe—

19. *Now the Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs,*

20. *Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies,*

21. *Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in Time paſt, that they which do ſuch Things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

22. *But the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith,*

23. There is no Law, that condemns ſuch virtuous Diſpoſitions and Practices as theſe.

23. *Meekneſs, Temperance: againſt ſuch there is no Law.*

24. And they that truly belong to Chriſt, make Proof of it, by mortifying the corrupt Inclinations of the Carnal Principle in their Hearts.

24. *And they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts.*

COMMENT.

FOR a right Improvement of the Scripture now in hand, it may ſuffice to obſerve the following Particulars.

I. *Firſt*, The juſt Extent and Meaning of thoſe Expreſſions, *walking in the Spirit*, and *being led by the Spirit*. There are few Words in Scripture of larger and more ambiguous Signification, than this of Spirit. Sometimes

Sometimes it ſignifies an intelligent and immaterial Subſtance at large, as in that Propoſition, *God is a Spirit.* Sometimes it is the Underſtanding Part of the Human Mind, diſtinguiſhed, not only from the Body, but from that Seat of the Affections, which Philoſophers are wont to call the Senſative Soul. Thus St. *Paul* aſks, *Who knoweth the Things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of a Man which is in him?* And prays for the *Theſſalonians, that their whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, may be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of the Lord Jeſus.* Sometimes it denotes the Third Perſon in the Bleſſed Trinity, as when we read of the Spirit being *grieved, tempted, ſent,* and upon many other Accounts mentioned in ſuch Manner, as I had Occaſion to explain at large, upon the Goſpel for *Whitſunday.* Sometimes it is put for the Gifts and Graces of that Spirit, whether Ordinary or Extraordinary; concerning which the Reader need go no farther for Satisfaction, than the Epiſtle for the *tenth* Sunday after *Trinity.* And ſometimes again imports the Goſpel of Chriſt, the Reaſon and Propriety whereof I have very lately accounted for. So that it ſhall ſuffice at preſent to ſay, that, in the Place before us, it muſt needs be taken in one of the *three* Senſes laſt mentioned; and in any of them it will anſwer the Apoſtle's Purpoſe: as is manifeſt, by his oppoſing it to the Fleſh, and the Law. For the Fleſh here denotes that corrupt Principle in every Man, which ſtrongly diſpoſes us to ſinful and preſent Profits and Pleaſures. And, as the Goſpel is ſometimes called the *Spirit,* becauſe the Graces and Guidance of the Holy Ghoſt are a Privilege peculiar to this Diſpenſation, and expreſly covenanted for under it: So the Law is ſometimes called the *Fleſh,* becauſe it neither could convey, nor did contract for, any ſuch ſupernatural Aſſiſtances; but left Men under the Power of their ſenſual Inclinations,

John iv. 24.

1 Cor. ii. 11.

1 Theſſ. v. 23.

Epiſt. 12 *Sund. after* Trin.

without the Counterbalance of any higher and better Principle.

Now the Uſe I would make of theſe ſeveral Diſtinctions is, to infer from them, that leading a Life of Purity and Virtue, in Oppoſition to our brutiſh and carnal Luſts, and a Law of carnal Ordinances; *living by Faith and Grace*, in Oppoſition to Works; and any Confidence in Moral Duties performed by Reaſon and natural Strength; that governing ourſelves by the Word of Chriſt, and following the Directions and holy Motions of his good Spirit within us; that theſe, I ſay, however expreſſed variouſly, do mean and come all to the ſame Thing at laſt. That he, who does one of them, does the other; and that *having the Spirit*, *living after the Spirit*, *walking in the Spirit*, and *being led by the Spirit*, include them all; in which ſoever of the forenamed Meanings the Word *Spirit* be uſed or interpreted. For evidence hereof no other Argument is needful, than St. *Paul*'s Catalogue of Virtues here, which he ſo poſitively affirms to be the *Fruit of the Spirit*; and that long black Roll of Vices, which he denominates *Works of the Fleſh*, and the *crucifying* whereof he gives in, as a certain Mark of being *Chriſt*'s. So perfectly unſcriptural are the fanciful Notions, which ſome have advanced concerning the Actings and the Signs of the Spirit; ſo great an Indignity to true Evangelical Religion are all the Reproaches and Diſparagements caſt upon Moral Duties, when performed by the Aſſiſtance of his Grace. I ſay, by the Aſſiſtance of his Grace, becauſe the

Ver. 22.

II. *Second* Thing I would obſerve, is that Encouragement for *walking in the Spirit*, but eſpecially the Ground and Foundation of it, which we have in the 16th and 17th Verſes. The Encouragement itſelf is, that by *walking in the Spirit we ſhall not fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh*: That is, we ſhall, by our Obedience to the Goſpel, and by the Power of that Grace, which always

always accompanies the true and practical Belief of it, be reſcued from the Tyranny of our Luſts, and not comply with their Seducements, and wicked Suggeſtions. This, I preſume, is plain enough, and eaſily accounted for. But the Difficulty lies in the Connexion of the next Words, which plainly makes them the Argument whereon this Encouragement depends. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the Luſt of the Fleſh:* How can we be ſure, that ſuch Walking will be attended with ſo happy an Effect? Why, even from hence: *For* (ſays he) that is, becauſe *the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh; and theſe are contrary the one to the other, ſo that ye cannot do the Things that ye would.* The true Meaning whereof muſt certainly be, that, as Chriſtians, who ſtill continue to be Men, do carry about with them a corrupt Principle, inclining them one Way; ſo have they, by Virtue of their being Chriſtians, a ſupernatural and divine Principle, drawing them another Way. That, if the former conſtantly diſpoſe them to Evil, the latter as conſtantly diſpoſes them to Good: The Conſequence of which different Diſpoſitions is, that *they cannot do thoſe Things that they would.* (Not that the regenerate Man is unable to perform that Good, which the Spirit moves him to deſire and endeavour the Performance of; but) He that is *led by* and *walks in the Spirit*, cannot conſent to do thoſe evil Things, which the fleſhly Principle inclines him to. For in ſo doing he breaks that Goſpel-Covenant, which had ſolemnly renounced thoſe Works of the Fleſh; he ceaſes to be *led by the Spirit*, the Moment he fulfils any of thoſe wicked Luſts. For this is the neceſſary Conſequence of the mutual Contrariety, taken notice of here between theſe two Principles. And he is aſſiſted and ſtrengthened by the Grace and Spirit of God, which being a Principle more powerful than that of corrupt Nature, enables him to reſiſt and overcome all the Suggeſtions and Allurements of its adverſe

verſe Principle. In a Word, as he, who is left to the Powers of Nature, cannot do the Good, which his own Reaſon or *the Law in his Mind*, tells him is fit to be done; becauſe deſtitute of that Spirit, which is the Cauſe of all the Good we do: So he, that is conducted by the Spirit, cannot comply with the *Law in his Members*, which is the Cauſe of all that Evil we do. The former is the Caſe of Perſons *under the Law*, repreſented at large in the *Seventh* to the *Romans*; the latter is the Privilege of Perſons *led by the Spirit*, aſſigned here as a Reaſon for their not *fulfilling the Luſts of the Fleſh*. And the Difficulty Men have uſually been entangled in concerning this Matter, ariſes from a Miſtake of the Apoſtle's Meaning and Deſign; by ſuppoſing him to ſpeak of the ſame ſort of Perſons in both Places. Than which nothing can be more foreign, both from the Context of each Paſſage, and from the Reaſon and Truth of the Caſe.

Ver. 18.

III. I obſerve once more, *Thirdly*, that among *the Works of the Fleſh* ſome are reckoned, which ſeem to conſiſt in the Errors and evil Diſpoſitions of the Mind. Such in particular are *Hereſy*, *Malice*, *Envy*, &c. But the Propriety of this Denomination may very well be juſtified, by conſidering, that even theſe are Effects of the ſame Cauſe, a wicked and worldly Principle; and that the Ends Men propoſe to themſelves, by indulging them, are Gratifications of the outward Man, by ſome Pleaſures and Advantages peculiar to the preſent State, and of a ſenſual Nature. Mean while, when theſe Works of the Fleſh are ſaid to be *manifeſt*; we may fairly underſtand it, that the Malignity of their Nature and Conſequences evidences itſelf to the Reaſon of every thinking Man; and, that nothing but Corruption, and Prejudice and Paſſion, could blind our Judgment, or ever reconcile us to the Practice and Indulgence of Vices, ſo pernicious and deteſtable.

I would

I would next obſerve the Elegance of St. *Paul*'s Metaphor, where he deſcribes the Chriſtians Character, by *crucifying* the Fleſh, with the Affections and Luſts; were it not that the next Lord's Day will give me an Opportunity of explaining that Expreſſion, and illuſtrating the Beauty of it more fully, than here I have room to do.

The Fourteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke xvii. 11.

PARAPHRASE.

11. *AND it came to paſs, as Jeſus went to Jeruſalem, that he paſſed through the midſt of Samaria and Galilee.*

12. *And as he entered into a certain Village, there met him ten Men that were Lepers, which * ſtood afar off.*

12. * Theſe Men, being by the Law of Leproſy ſeparated from Society with any of their Brethren, (ſee *Levit.* xiii, xiv.) durſt not approach.

13. *And they lifted up their Voices, and ſaid, Jeſus, Maſter, have Mercy on us.*

14. *And when he ſaw them, he ſaid unto them, Go ſhew yourſelves unto the Prieſts. And it came to paſs that, as they went, they were cleanſed.*

14. Go offer yourſelves to the Examination of the Prieſts, as the Law directs. They went, believing they ſhould be found clean, by virtue of his Word: And accordingly, before they reached the Prieſts, they were cleanſed.

15. *And one of them, when he ſaw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud Voice glorified God.*

16. *And fell down on his Face † at his Feet, giving him Thanks, and he was a Samaritan.*

16. † Now conſcious of his Cure, and daring to come near him.

17. *And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, Were there not ten cleanſed, but where are the nine?*

18. *There are not found that returned to give Glory to God, ſave this Stranger.*

19. *And he ſaid unto him, Ariſe, Go thy way: Thy Faith hath made thee whole.*

COMMENT.

THE Nature of the Diſtemper, with which theſe Perſons were infected, the legal Defilement contracted by it, the Obligation of preſenting themſelves to the Prieſts, and the Reaſons for aſcribing ſuch Cures to a miraculous Operation, have been particularly conſidered heretofore. That which remains, peculiar to this Place, is the Behaviour of the Parties, upon whom the Benefit was beſtowed. Their Complaint was common, as well as their Calamity; but they, who were unanimouſly loud in their Requeſt, and ſeemed equally ſenſible of their Affliction, were far from being equally affected with their Deliverance. Nine of the Ten no ſooner received the Mercy, but they forgot it too. And only one poor *Samaritan* of the whole Number had the Grace to come back, and, with a becoming Humility and Zeal, to pay the Acknowledgments due for ſo ſudden, ſo ſignal, a Benefit.

Goſp. 3 S. after Epiph.

This Miracle, and the Circumſtances attending it, (like ſundry others done by our Bleſſed Lord) carried a very ſignificant Senſe, couched under that, which lies open to common View. It is a lively Image of the Reception, which *Jeſus* and his Goſpel met with in the World: How the ungrateful *Jews* rejected both with Indignation and Scorn: How the Gentiles, like this *Samaritan*, from whom ſuch an Inſtance of Ingenuity could be leaſt expected, received his Doctrine thankfully, improved it diligently, and ſhewed, that they valued the ineſtimable Mercy juſtly.

But it offers to our Conſideration ſomething beſides, which we are more nearly concerned to take ſtrict notice of. For, the Truth is, this Paſſage is the very Picture of Mankind; and holds to us a Glaſs, in which almoſt

almoſt every Soul may ſee its own Diſpoſition, but too exactly reſembled, too ſtrongly reflected. The Generality of the World, are they not like theſe Lepers, extremely clamorous and importunate in their Cries and Complaints, impatient of Sorrow and Diſtreſs; but when thoſe Cries have prevailed for Eaſe and Deliverance, are they not then every whit as like them, in the other Part of their Deportment too? For rarely, very rarely, do we meet with ſuch vigorous Impreſſions, ſuch becoming Acknowledgments, as every conſidering Stander-by can eaſily diſcern the Goodneſs of God to call for at our Hands. How often, in the Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of our Souls, when a ſudden Danger hath threatened our Perſons, or a waſting Sickneſs hath brought us down to the Gates of the Grave; when the Guilt of our paſt Lives hath ſtared us in the Face, and the Proſpect of Hell, gaping to receive us, hath diſtracted the Conſcience with Amazement and Deſpair: How often, I ſay, in Seaſons of public or private Calamity, in Concern for ourſelves, or for ſome very dear to us, have we poured our Hearts, before God, and ſhewed him of all our Trouble? Promiſed, if he would ſpare that Relation, recover us from that Diſeaſe, or put away from us that Death only, or pardon that Sin which wounded our Hearts, that we would never forget the mighty Mercy? And yet how ſuddenly, how ſcandalouſly, have his gracious Condeſcenſions, and our moſt ſolemn and affectionate Vows ſlipped out of our Minds? How have all Remembrances, all Effects of his Rod been quite loſt and gone, as ſoon as ever the Smart of it ceaſed? All, I ſay, except that worſt and moſt deplorable Effect, of increaſing our Condemnation, and having his merciful Anſwers to our Requeſts riſe up in Judgment againſt us? We read the Goſpel for this Day in cold Blood, and ſtand perhaps aſtoniſhed at the Stupidity of thoſe baſe unthankful Lepers: And yet,

yet, if we deſcend into our own Breaſts, they are able to reproach us, as *Nathan* did *David*, with a *Thou art the Man.* Nay, thou art worſe than the worſt of thoſe Men, whom thou blameſt for forgetting one Mercy; for every one of us have received frequent and eminent Inſtances of the Divine Goodneſs: No Day paſſes, without refreſhing our Memories by new Demonſtrations of it; and yet (inſenſible Wretches that we are) ſcarce one among us takes Care to acknowledge it in any tolerable Manner; or makes his Praiſes in Eaſe and Proſperity, hold Proportion with his Prayers, when in Miſery and Want. Theſe are Reflexions which the Caſe before us miniſters but too juſt Occaſion for. And therefore the proper Improvement of it, I conceive, would be, to inquire into the moſt probable Cauſes of this ſo general Ingratitude, and then to ſhew the mighty Engagements we have to be thankful. The Former, being more directly appoſite to the Circumſtances of theſe Lepers, ſhall be my Buſineſs at this Time; the Latter will have a very fit Opportunity for employing our Meditations hereafter.

Epiſt. 20 *S. aft.* Trin.

1. Now the *Firſt* and Principal Cauſe of Ingratitude I take to be Pride. A Vice of ſo malignant Influence, that it ſeems at perfect Enmity with every Sort of Virtue whatſoever. But that of Thankfulneſs it utterly deſtroys, and tears up the very Foundations, on which this ſhould be built. For no Man will be forward to return Thanks, who does not eſteem himſelf obliged; and no Man can think he is obliged, who does not acknowledge the Receipt of ſomewhat more than his due. Now that Acknowledgment proud Men are very hardly brought to. We ſee in good Offices that paſs between one another, how apt ſuch are to look upon all Favours, all Reſpects, as leſs than they deſerve; to ſuppoſe their very Acceptance a Condeſcenſion, and all the Return they owe. And were

were this fond Imagination only among Equals, it were ſomething more tolerable; but vain Man makes no Difference; nor ſticks to carry on the ſame Extravagance toward Almighty God himſelf. He forgets the infinite Diſtance, between the Lord and Creator of all Things, and a poor Worm of the Earth. He fancies, that ſuch a one's imperfect polluted Services can even merit at the Hands of the moſt High; and overlooks, not only the Defects of his beſt Actions, but the vaſt black Catalogue of his bad ones: Both which quite cancel thoſe Pretenſions, and leave him no Deſervings, except ſuch as are worſe than none, thoſe of an angry Juſtice, taking Vengeance in everlaſting Flames.

This ſeems to have made the Difference, between the nine leprous *Jews*, and the *Samaritan* here. *They* (agreeable to the *Temper* of that People, who valued themſelves upon being God's peculiar) thought nothing extraordinary, that he could do for them: He, who had not the like Vanity, nor any *Title* to plead; received his Cure, not as a Debt, but as a Grace; and he demeaned himſelf accordingly. And, in this Frame of Mind, he ſhewed a nearer Alliance to their boaſted Anceſtors; than thoſe *Jews*, who were ſo highly exalted with the Privileges of that Deſcent.

For *Abraham*, who had the Honour to be ſtiled *God's Friend*, made no Difficulty to humble himſelf with the Name of *Duſt and Aſhes*; and, in much Lowlineſs of Mind, checks his own Preſumption, for taking the Boldneſs to ſpeak unto the Lord. *Jacob* confeſſes himſelf *leſs than the leaſt of all God's Mercies, and of all the Truth which he had ſhewed unto his Servant.* And that humble Senſe puts him upon ſo gratefully recounting the Increaſe God had given him, and acknowledging, that it was of his doing alone, that *he, who paſſed over Jordan with his ſtaff, had now become two Bands.* *David* acknowledges himſelf

Iſa. xli. 8. Gen. xviii. 27.

Gen. xxxii. 10.

himſelf a *Worm and no Man*, and that meek Reflexion diſpoſed him, with more readineſs to *offer to God the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving, and to pay him the Vows, which were promiſed in his Trouble.* The great *Teacher* of the *Gentiles*, who was taken up into the third Heaven; and had Revelations imparted, too glorious for human *Tongue* to utter, does yet deſcend ſo low, as to term himſelf, *the leaſt of the Apoſtles, not meet to be called an Apoſtle*; and, which is more, not only *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, but even chief of Sinners.* Hence ſprung thoſe Raptures of Praiſe and Thanks, ſo frequent in his Epiſtles, wherein all Worth of his own is utterly diſclaimed. *Not I*, ſays he, *but the Grace of God that is in me.* Hence that perpetual magnifying of the Divine Goodneſs, and the arguing, that it is God only, *who makes one Man to differ from another* in any reſpect; that *whatſoever* any Man *hath*, he *hath received* it; and received it, not in the quality of a Debt, but of a Gift. Nay, even that *Lord of* all, *in whom all the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt bodily*, did not think it beneath him, to pay devout and ſolemn Thanks to his co-equal Father, upon any extraordinary Demonſtrations of the Divine Power and Love. In one Word, ſo eſſential is Humility to Gratitude, that our excellent Church hath wiſely taught us, in the Prayer appointed for that Purpoſe, to begin with acknowledging ourſelves God's *unworthy Servants.* Conſidering well, that without a due Senſe of a Man's own Unworthineſs it is not poſſible to render God *humble and hearty Thanks, for all his Goodneſs and Loving-kindneſs*; nor to *have that due Senſe of all his Mercies*, which muſt make *our Hearts unfeignedly thankful.*

Pſal. xxii. 6.

Pſal. lxvi. 12.

2 Cor. xii. 2. 4.
1 Cor. xv. 9.
Eph. iii. 8.
1 Tim. i. 15.

1 Cor. xv. 10.
—iv. 7.

Matt. xi. 25.
John xi. 41.

General Thankſgiving.

2. A *Second*

2. A *Second* Obſtruction to Gratitude, and that, which indeed is a natural Effect of the Former, is Envy. When we grudge the Happineſs of others; and think God ſtrait-handed, and even injurious, to us, becauſe he hath perhaps dealt his Bleſſings more bountifully to them. This I call the Effect of Pride, becauſe it ſuppoſes our own Deſerts to be equal at leaſt, if not ſuperior, to theirs: For ſo much is plainly implied, in every ſuch murmuring and accuſing of Providence. And a very evil and common Diſeaſe this is. For cure whereof I know no better Expedient, than to turn our Reflexion the quite contrary Way. To conſider, I mean, not how many are Richer, or Greater, or Happier; but how many are more Indigent, more Deſpiſed, more Miſerable: And theſe too, very probably, ſuch Sort of Perſons, as we can give no Account, why they ſhould have leſs of a kind and indulgent Providence, than ourſelves. For alas! would every one look well at Home; they all would find abundant Cauſe to admire that Patience and Long-ſuffering and Liberality, which ſo vaſtly exceeds their own Deſerts; without daring to quarrel at thoſe Diſpenſations, wherein the Reſt of the World are concerned.

3. Another very great Occaſion of Unthankfulneſs ariſes from want of conſidering ſufficiently, how far God is intereſted in every Affair and Event of human Life. We ſee (for Inſtance) that Study is bleſſed with Wiſdom and Increaſe of Knowledge; that Diligence and Frugality end in Riches; that Courage and Conduct and Numbers are crowned with Victory; and the like: And from hence we are betrayed into a falſe Concluſion, by attributing theſe Succeſſes to thoſe Meaſures, as their proper adequate Cauſes. Then we take one Step farther to indulge our Vanity; and pleaſe ourſelves with a Notion, of being the Makers of our own Fortunes, and the Givers of all theſe good

Things to ourſelves. But alas! though ſuch be the general and ordinary Courſe of Providence; yet how often does it, as it were, go out of its Way, by diſappointing the moſt probable Expectations, defeating the ſubtleſt Contrivances and moſt laborious Purſuits, and crowning the moſt unpromiſing Attempts with a Succeſs, which it would have looked like Madneſs, but once to have entertained a Thought of? All which is intended no doubt to direct us (and every wiſe and good Man will be directed by it) to the Acknowledgment of an over-ruling, though an unſeen, Hand; one, that hath not bound itſelf up in any Laws of Nature or Neceſſity, but gives or with-holds according to its own good Pleaſure: That leaves no Ground for depending upon the wiſeſt and beſt Endeavours; and hath not loſt the Honour of the Action, even when it is moſt our own. Remarkable to this Purpoſe is that Advice of *Moſes* to the *Iſraelites*; *When thou haſt eaten and art full, then thou ſhalt bleſs the Lord thy God for the good Land that he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, and thou ſay in thine Heart, My Power and the Might of my Hand hath gotten me this Wealth; but thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he, that giveth thee* the Power to get Wealth.

Deut. viii. 10, 18.

4. The laſt Cauſe of Ingratitude I ſhall mention at preſent, is Forgetfulneſs. The Bleſſings of God, 'tis true, far exceed all the Power of Recollection; but the more ſcandalous it is, that out of ſo very many, we ſhould reflect upon ſo very few. Our Memories are likewiſe treacherous; but it is chiefly in thoſe Inſtances, which we are not deſirous, or think not worth the Care, of remembering. And it is notably obſerved by *Tully*, (who undertakes to ſave the credit of Old Age in this reſpect) that he never yet met with any Man ſo far decayed, as to forget, how he had diſpoſed of his Mortgage Deeds and

Cato Major.

and his Money. So, did we but rightly eſteem the Gifts of our Benefactor, they would occur to our Thoughts in greater Numbers; whereas now a cuſtomary Bounty quickly grows familiar and neglected. This may, and ſhould by all Means be remedied, by taking Pains to repreſent to our Minds, in the moſt lively Manner, the infinite Variety of Mercies we receive. Thoſe that ſeem to be Benefits of Courſe, and enjoyed in common with all Mankind: Thoſe that are National, or Local, or Domeſtic, or Perſonal: And theſe ſhould be recounted very often, becauſe ſcarce any Day paſſes, without ſome memorable Inſtance, not any, to be ſure, without the Renewal, of manifold Bleſſings, in ſome Capacity or other. But thoſe, which ſhould always be uppermoſt in our Eſteem, and conſequently would be ſo in our Thoughts, are the ſpiritual Mercies, *the ineſtimable Love of God in the Redemption of the World by Jeſus Chriſt, the Means of Grace, and the Hope of Glory.* All theſe ſhould be nicely obſerved, juſtly valued, and ſeriouſly conſidered. And, were they ſo; we ſhould be out of all Danger of falling under the Reproach of the nine *Jews:* And daily, hourly, with the humble Zeal of that ingenuous *Samaritan*, ſhould *with loud Voices glorify God, and fall down at Jeſus his Feet, and give* him thoſe Thanks, which to him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, do continually belong. To whom therefore be Glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Fifteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

KEEP, we beſeech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual Mercy. And becauſe the Frailty of Man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy Help from all Things hurtful, and lead us to all Things profitable to our Salvation, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Gal. vi. 11.

11. *YE ſee how large a Letter I have written unto you with my own Hand.*

12. They, who would ingratiate themſelves with the *Jews*, preſs upon you the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, that by ſo doing they may avoid Perſecution for the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith.

12. *As many as deſire to make a fair Shew in the Fleſh, they conſtrain you to be circumciſed; only leſt they ſhould ſuffer Perſecution for the Croſs of Chriſt.*

13. Not out of any true Zeal to the Law, which Circumciſion is an Engagement to obſerve; but that they may have the Glory of making, even among the Gentiles, Proſelytes to the Ordinances of *Moſes*.

13. *For neither they themſelves who are circumciſed keep the Law; but deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your Fleſh.*

14. I on the other hand covet no Honour, but that of knowing and profeſſing Chriſt, after the Example of whoſe Death all carnal and worldly Deſires are mortified to me, and I to them.

14. *But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.*

15. For under the Goſpel Covenant it is not of any Conſequence, whether a Man be circumciſed or not, but all depends upon the Renewal of his Heart and Life. (See Epiſt. for 6 S. after *Trin.*)

15. *For in Chriſt Jeſus neither Circumciſion availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but a new Creature.*

16. *And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them and Mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.*

17. *From*

17. *From henceforth let no Man trouble me; for I bear in my Body the Marks of the Lord Jesus.*

17. Let me not therefore be any more disquieted about this Contention upon the Point of the Mosaical Law; for I have those Marks, which prove to what Master I belong; even the Persecutions, which I endure for my Fidelity to *Jesus Christ*.

18. *Brethren, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit.* Amen.

COMMENT.

THE Apostle here concludes his Epistle to the *Galatians*, with giving the true Character of their false Teachers, and a necessary Vindication of his own. Of them he affirms, that all the Fierceness of their pretended Zeal for the Rites of *Moses* was merely a time-serving Compliance; to shelter themselves from the implacable Malice of the *Jews*, who persecuted all those, who had the Hardiness to preach up the Expiration of the Law, as a Dispensation superseded by the Death of Christ. Of himself he professes, that his End was purely to advance the true Christian Religion: That Christ crucified, though a Doctrine of great Offence to some, was yet to him (as sure it must be to every one, who considers what the Son of God vouchsafed to endure for him) his only Glory: And, that the Favour or Friendship of Men, and all other temporal Advantages, were no longer of any Consideration with him: In regard all Desires of this Kind were now subdued, which had rendered them incapable of making, and his own Mind of receiving, any farther Influences or Impressions from that Quarter. This Abstractedness of Affection, which reconciled him to any Sufferings for the Truth's Sake, he expresses here very emphatically, as an Effect of Christ's Death upon him, in those Words, that *the World was* thereby *crucified to him*, and *he unto the World*.

Epiſt. for 1 *S. aft.* Eaſt.

What we are to underſtand by the *World*, in this and ſuch like Paſſages of Scripture, I have formerly taken Occaſion to explain at large. To which Place if my Reader pleaſe to caſt back his Eye, he will eaſily perceive, that *putting off the old Man, deſtroying the Body of Sin, mortifying the Deeds of the Body through the Spirit*, and *our Members that are upon the Earth, crucifying the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts, being dead to Sin, crucified with Chriſt*, and *to the World*, and *the World being crucified to us*, are all of them Terms of much the ſame Importance and Extent. My Deſign at preſent is to ſhew the Elegance and Propriety of this laſt Metaphor in particular; and why the Death our carnal and worldly Deſires are to be put to, ſhould be repreſented by Crucifixion. Of which I think it may ſuffice very well to aſſign the *Three* following Reaſons.

1. *Firſt*, This is a very ſignificant Expreſſion, as it naturally awakens in us a Remembrance of our Saviour Chriſt's Death: Who by ſuffering upon the Croſs himſelf, hath left us the greateſt Example, and the moſt forcible Obligation, for dealing thus with our rebellious Appetites. Hence 'tis we find the Duty of Mortification ſo induſtriouſly urged from this Topic. So St. *Peter*, *Foraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered in the Fleſh, arm your ſelves likewiſe with the ſame Mind; for he that hath ſuffered in the Fleſh hath ceaſed from Sin; that he no longer ſhould live the Reſt of his Time in the Fleſh, to the Luſts of Men, but to the Will of God.* So St. *Paul* very frequently, but more eſpecially in that Chapter to the *Romans*: Where he proſecutes the Argument at large; telling us, that *we are buried with Chriſt by Baptiſm; as knowing this, that our old Man is crucified with him, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin; for he that is dead is freed from Sin.* And again, in the *Second* of this Epiſtle, declaring himſelf to be *dead to the*

1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.

Rom. vi. 3, 6, 7.

See Epiſt. for 6 *S. aft.* Trin.

Law

Law that he might live unto God, he acquaints us how he came to be ſo, in theſe Words, *I am crucified with Chriſt.* Ver. 19, 20.

Thus to imitate their Bleſſed Maſter, is not only the Duty, but the Glory of Chriſtians. To us is reſerved the Honour of compleating, and of being able to give the finiſhing Stroke to, all that our great Redeemer had begun. For the moſt important, and moſt ſaving Circumſtances of his Life and Death are to be acted over again, by and upon our own ſelves, to ſecure the full Efficacy, that God ordained them for. He, who brought Accompliſhment to all preceding Laws and Revelations, and was the Subſtance of Prophecies and Types, continued for four thouſand Years together; was yet content to become himſelf (in ſome Senſe and Degree) a Figure of every private Believer. Oh the admirable Mixture of this Wiſdom and Condeſcenſion! By which it was contrived, that the Things, impoſſible to be effected by the Strength of Man, ſhould be undertaken by the Eternal and Almighty Son of God; and yet, that even this Undertaking of the Son of God ſhould, as to the Succeſs of it in each Man's particular Caſe, depend upon ſomething done by himſelf, as neceſſary to conſummate and crown it!

Such are the Advantages of, and Motives to this Duty, ariſing from the Conſideration of our Bleſſed Saviour's Example. But there is alſo upon us the ſtrongeſt Obligation poſſible, to deal with the World and the Fleſh after this Manner, upon the Account of his being *crucified*. Any Sort of Death undergone by him, would have engaged us to what went before; but his Death was attended with ſuch Circumſtances of Suffering, as muſt needs melt the moſt rocky Heart into Compaſſion, and leave us even loſt in Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, at his unparalleled Humility, invincible Meekneſs, and incomprehenſible Love. Now theſe Reflections purſued a little farther, by re-

preſenting, not only, who it was that endured, but upon what Account, will ſhew the true Cauſe and Foundation of all thoſe Sufferings to be laid in thoſe very Luſts, which properly give the Denomination to a carnal and worldly Mind. Theſe are the Inſtigators and Actors of every crying Abomination, which required the Atonement of his moſt precious Blood. Theſe were the *Betrayers* and *Murderers*, of *that Holy One*; the Burden that weighed down, and (if I may be allowed ſo to ſpeak) the wicked Hands, that *crucified his very Soul*, by that Horror and Amazement, which gave him Tortures more exquiſite than all the Anguiſh of his acuteſt bodily Pains. And are not we the baſeſt and moſt inſenſible of all Wretches, if this will not provoke us to Revenge? If it do not kindle in our Breaſts an Indignation and Hatred, never to be pacified with any Thing leſs, than the utter Deſtruction of thoſe his vileſt Enemies? It is recorded of ſome of the beſt Kings in Scripture, that the Death of thoſe Traitors, who had murdered their Fathers, was one of the firſt Inſtances, in which their Royal Authority was exerciſed. This was eſteemed a neceſſary Act of Juſtice, a pious Severity, due to the Honour of the injured Dead, and to the Security of the living Heir. And if ſuch Executions were commendable in them; how ſhall we anſwer it to the Prince of Life and Glory, if the Vices, that conſpired his Death, eſcape unpuniſhed? How can we promiſe ourſelves Safety, if we bear to foſter thoſe Vipers in our Boſom; and forgetting his Wrongs and our own Danger, are reconciled to thoſe treacherous mortal Foes, from whoſe Subtlety and mercileſs Tyranny he died to reſcue us? O let us ſo remember theſe Things, as to ſharpen our juſt Reſentment, and kindle a holy Rage in us; that we may diſdain all Peace, and glut our Fury with the utter Deſtruction of theſe inteſtine Enemies. The more provoking their Offence hath been, the more exemplary let their

Puniſhment

Puniſhment be. Let us then nail them to the Croſs of Chriſt, by making that the Inſtrument of their Death, and ſacrificing them to the Honour and Memory of his bitter Paſſion. For all this the Holy Ghoſt may well be ſuppoſed to inſinuate, when commanding us to *crucify*, and be *crucified to*, the Fleſh and the World.

2. *Secondly*, The *crucifying* of theſe was a very proper Metaphor, as that was a ſure indeed, but withal a very ſlow and lingering, Death. The ſeveral Goſpels take Notice of this, in that Paſſage concerning the two *Thieves*, whoſe Life was ſtill in them after many Hours. And therefore, for Prevention of Recovery and Eſcape, or for quicker Diſpatch, their Legs were broken at taking down from the Croſs; while of our Saviour it is obſerved, that *Pilate marvelled if he were already dead*; Mark xv. 44, 45. and refuſed to grant his Body, till ſatisfied by the Centurion's *Teſtimony*, that it was certainly ſo. Thus is it likewiſe with the Offenders we are treating of. Subdued and killed they muſt be; but this Conqueſt aſks a great deal of Time. Death cannot be given them at one Stroke, though never ſo reſolute, never ſo well directed; but the Blows muſt be followed thick, and many repeated Wounds and Bruiſes muſt go to the effecting of it. This is not a Work of Violence, or to be done at a Heat; but by frequent Buffetings, long Diligence, and continual Watchfulneſs. Their Strength muſt be waſted and worn out; Recruit and Time for Breath conveys new Life into them. It often happens, that they lie for Dead, and ſo tempt us to neglect them; but that Appearance of Safety is our moſt fatal Overthrow. For we muſt take good Heed, that thoſe Terms of *Mortifying* and *Killing* do not betray us into Security, by miſtaken Apprehenſions of this Matter. The evil Principle muſt be ſo quelled, as to put it paſt the Power of acting with any Vigor or Succeſs;

Succeſs; but we can never wholly root out the Cauſe, nor get quit of the firſt common Matter, out of which our Luſts are formed. We may correct and diſable Nature; but we cannot annihilate it: For ſo long as Bodies of Fleſh and Senſe bear us Company, we cannot but continue in a Condition of Frailty and Danger. There is (as I have lately obſerved) a Contrariety of Principles in fallen Mankind; a Difference of Ends for our Deſires and diſtinct Motives, that incline and perſuade us. So that one of the two will always govern; and it is our Buſineſs (in which we have the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit) to ſet this Biaſs of Nature and Paſſion the right Way; to caſt the Weight on the Side of Reaſon and Religion, and yield ourſelves up to their Guidance. Thus the ſenſual Appetites will not have Opportunity to rebel; or if they do, the Attempt will prove feeble and vain. For they are then killed, when no Motion or Sign of Life appears; or when reduced ſo low, that their Motions are very rare, and faint, and always ineffectual. And, in regard the bringing them down to this Degree of Impotence requires long and continued Conflicts, in which they die away by Degrees, and hold out even to a Miracle; therefore the Figure of Killing is yet more elegant and lively, and receives a great Improvement, by determining the Kind of Death, and ſpecifying in that Crucifixion particularly.

3. This is alſo very ſignificant, *Thirdly*, if we reflect upon the Ignominy and Painfulneſs of that Death. A Death reſtrained to the meaneſt of Slaves, and the moſt ſcandalous of Malefactors. It is therefore oppoſed here to *glorying* in *any Thing but* the Croſs of Chriſt, to denote the Contempt St *Paul* treated the World with, and, that all the Advantages and Allurements of it were vile to the laſt Degree; or, as he elſewhere ſays, counted but *Droſs and Dung*, in Compariſon of *the Excellency of*

Phil. iii. 8.

the

the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. A Death of Torments inexpreſſible; which every violent Death muſt be, in Proportion as it is more lingering. Now in Crucifixion, beſides that none of the Vitals are immediately aſſaulted, and ſo Nature feels her own leiſurely Decay; the very Weight of the Body upon the pierced Hands and Feet (where a wonderful Complication of Nerves and Sinews renders the Senſe quicker) muſt needs create an Anguiſh beyond Imagination. Thus alſo the mortifying our corrupt Affections muſt needs (as Matters now ſtand with us) be a mighty Force upon Nature. Of which our Lord no doubt was ſenſible, when he choſe the *cutting off a right Hand*, and *plucking out a right Eye*, as Phraſes fit to denote the ſtrict Reſtraints and unrelenting Severities, which are requiſite upon theſe Occaſions. This is ſo far from needing any Proof, that each Man's own Experience teaches it but too well. For one great Advantage taken againſt the ſelf-denying Duties of Religion, is the pretended Unreaſonableneſs of contending with Nature, and the Hardſhip and Barbarity of turning our own daily Executioners. But the Obligation, and the Benefit of doing ſo, as well as the Fallacy of all Arguments to the contrary, have had their Places of being conſidered heretofore. Nor do they fall within the Compaſs of my preſent Argument: For this is only concerned to prove the Fitneſs of the Apoſtle's Expreſſion, of *Crucifying, and being Crucified* to, Sin, the Fleſh, and the World. And of that I hope the Particulars now inſiſted on, are Evidence ſufficient.

Matt. v. 29.

Epiſt. 6 *Sunday after* Trin.

The Fifteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

St. Matth. vi. 24.

24. Now to the Intent the Charity recommended before (*ver.* 19, 20.) may be more chearfully exerciſed and the Mind directed to its true Object (*ver.* 22, 23.) conſider that no Man can ſerve two Maſters, who command contrary Things, (as God and the World always do) at one and the ſame Time.

24. *NO Man can ſerve two Maſters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.*

25. Be not therefore anxious for the Neceſſaries of Life; for he that gave that Life cannot want either the Power or the Will to give Proviſions for ſuſtaining it.

25. *Therefore, I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink: nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on. Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?*

26. Obſerve what Care he takes of living Creatures, of leſs Value than You in his Eſteem; and ſee how needleſs ſuch Solicitude is.

26. *Behold the Fowls of the Air: for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

27. And withal ſee, how very ineffectual ſuch diſquieting Cares are of themſelves; for if his Bleſſings do not proſper and co-operate with you, all your own Endeavours can effect nothing.

27. *Which of you by taking Thought can add one Cubit unto his Stature?*

28, 29, 30. Nay, deſcend yet lower than the Animals, and obſerve the Beauties of every Field; whoſe Cloathing exceeds all the Gaieties of Art. And is it not a manifeſt Want of Faith, to ſuppoſe that he who thus adorns the Vegetables, will be unconcerned to furniſh Men, and Chriſtians, with needful Cloathing.

28. *And why take ye thought for Raiment? conſider the Lillies of the Field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they ſpin;*

29. *And yet I ſay unto you, That even Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of theſe.*

30. *Wherefore if God ſo clothe the Graſs of the Field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?*

31. *Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat, or What ſhall we drink, or, wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed?*

32. *(For after all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things.*

32. Theſe Diſtruſts were much leſs unbecoming ignorant Heathens; but are very criminal in you, who have been better inſtructed concerning the Providence of God; both that, which is general over all his Creatures; and that, which is diſtinguiſhing and peculiar to his faithful Servants.

33. *But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.*

33. Let it therefore be your firſt Care to recommend yourſelves to him; by doing your Duty, and ſecuring the Happineſs of another Life: and the Proviſions neceſſary for this Life, ſhall be thrown into you as over Meaſure.

34. *Take therefore no Thought for the morrow: for the Morrow ſhall take thought for the Things of itſelf. Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.*

34. So unreaſonable upon all theſe Accounts it is, to diſtract your Thoughts about ſubſiſting hereafter; which is but anticipating your Trouble, of which the preſent Time hath always enough to exerciſe your Care.

COMMENT.

THE Paraphraſe hath intimated, how well it agrees with our Lord's Deſign in ſome Paſſages juſt before, to reſtrain the inordinate Love and Care for the Conveniences of this preſent World. This is done in the Goſpel for the Day, which conſiſts entirely of Arguments directed to that Purpoſe. Upon each whereof I ſhall obſerve ſomewhat very briefly, and then infer from the Whole theſe two Points, very neceſſary to be rightly underſtood by every Man. (1.) The Nature of that Carefulneſs here forbidden; And, (2). The Duty of *That*, which is ſtill not only allowed, but even expected, with regard to theſe Matters.

I begin with our Saviour's Arguments intended to abate of your inordinate Concern for the *Things* of this World.

I. The

I. The first of these is the Danger of alienating our Hearts from God, and growing negligent in His Service, by addicting ourselves to the Love and Pursuit of temporal Advantages. *No Man can serve two Masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* The Force of this Reason turns upon two Points: The one implied, the other expressed. *First*, it is implied, That every Man hath some Master: That is, some Object, the Love and Desire whereof sits supreme in his Heart, and is the governing Principle of his Actions and Behaviour. In this Sense our Saviour says, *whosoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* And St. *Paul, Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey?* And St. *Peter, While they promise them Liberty, they themselves are the Servants of Corruption, for of whom a Man is overcome, of the same is he brought in Bondage.* Such a State of Subjection cannot be separated from the Notion, and Being of any Creature whatsoever. For no Creature is self-sufficient. And, since all naturally desire and labour after Happiness; all who have not wherewithal to furnish themselves, must seek it in somewhat without them. And whatever it be, in which they place and hope for Happiness, that is their Master. Thence their Love, their Desire, their Fear, their every Passion are drawn; thither all their Actions and Purposes tend: This is the Source, and this is the End, where all they do, and suffer, meets at last, like Lines in their common Center.

Ver. 24.

John viii. 34.

Rom. vi. 16.

2 Pet. ii. 19.

Now from hence plainly follows the *Second* Point expressed in the Argument here; which is, the Impossibility of having more than one such Master. For, in regard every created Mind depends upon Happiness from something without itself; it cannot be equally

equally affected toward any other Object, as to this. All the reſt will be valued, either in Subordination to it, or declined and deteſted for their Oppoſition againſt it, and Inconſiſtency with it. In the *former* Caſe, the Maſter ſtill retains his Dominion; though Others, for the Sake of their Subſerviency, are allowed a Place in the Affections. But in the *latter* Caſe, the Ends aimed at are contrary; and the Methods for attaining them contrary; and therefore, ſo far as we incline and approach to the one, at ſo much farther Diſtance are we from the other. Indifference in the Point there cannot be, where the Ends are contrary; Subordinacy of Service there cannot be neither, where the Ways to them are contrary. And this our Lord declares to be the Caſe between *God* and *Mammon*. Both cannot be ſerved; both cannot be loved: For the one is the Object of Faith, the other of Senſe. The Happineſs propoſed from the one, is ſpiritual and future and eternal; that, which we flatter ourſelves with Hopes of from the other, is ſenſual and preſent and tranſitory. The Method of obtaining the One is to be ſtrictly juſt and holy and good; to look beyond and in our Hearts to get above the World. The Way to Happineſs preſcribed by the other, is to boggle at nothing, though never ſo baſe and unjuſt; to ſuffer no Conſiderations of Religion to reſtrain or check our Purſuits; but to ſet our Hearts, and Hands, and Heads, continually at work; and reſolve to get Riches, and Honour, and Power, and Pleaſure, how dear ſoever they coſt us, here, or hereafter.

Mean while it ſeems to me very obſervable, that our Lord here ſeems to make ſome Difference, between *loving the One and hating the Other, and holding to the One and deſpiſing the Other of the two Maſters*. For we cannot fairly conclude, that what went before, that loving the World, in any Degree whatſoever, is altogether inconſiſtent with the Love of God. The Neceſſities of Human Life, and the Supplies they aſk

and find from Worldly Accommodations, make it impoſſible for a Creature, conſtituted as we are, not to retain a tender Regard for the Comforts upon which its Subſiſtence, or at leaſt the Eaſe of it, in ſo great a Meaſure depends. And that, which Nature hath made neceſſary, the God of Nature will not condemn as ſinful. But we are then only in a criminal Senſe Lovers of the World, when this ſo entirely poſſeſſes our Hearts, that we have no Love left for God. And any Exigence, by which theſe are brought into competition, effectually makes the Diſcovery, where our Maſter-paſſion is placed. For, where our Affection for both cannot be indulged and gratified, the chooſing whether of the two we will prefer and abide by, and whether we are content to forego, is a ſufficient Evidence of the Love and Hatred intended by our Bleſſed Lord in the Aphoriſm now before us. And this Conſtruction we have his own Authority for; who, by ſaying, *If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Siſters, yea and his own Life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple*, had no Deſign to inſinuate, that the becoming void of natural Affection was a requiſite Prediſpoſition to the becoming a good Chriſtian; but only, that the deareſt Things in the World ought not to rival, or have the preference above him. For ſo he clearly explains himſelf in another Evangeliſt, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* In ſhort, love and value theſe we may, provided that Affection and Eſteem keep within its juſt Bounds, and give place to a better and more amiable Object. For in our Saviour's Language, not to *love more* is equivalent to *hating*; and that which we do not *hold* to, we are accounted to *deſpiſe*.

Luke xiv. 26.

Matt. x. 37.

But ſtill there is a great deal of Danger, in indulging even this lawful Love of the World. Not only, becauſe the

the Objects of it, being ſenſible and preſent Conveniences, are apt to gain upon our Hearts, and engage them farther than we are generally well aware, toward that Love which is unlawful; but becauſe this is very apt to impoſe upon us, in the Judgments we make of our own Spiritual State. For many a Man, no doubt, is really devoted to the World, who thinks himſelf not at all ſo. We generally ſuppoſe our Hearts right with God, ſo long as we can reaſon ourſelves into the clear Reaſon, and Duty, of loving Him above all Things. Whereas alas! the Proofs to be given of this Love, do not conſiſt in ſpeculative Arguments, but in Habits and Actions. And they, who feel no Difficulty in concluding that no other Object is comparable to God, when in cool Blood, and while Want keeps at a Diſtance; find themſelves quite different Sort of Perſons, when the Neceſſities of human Nature bring them to the Trial, and all the Paſſions conſpire to take their Part againſt Reaſon and Religion. The only Way therefore to ſecure ourſelves againſt the Hazards of any ſuch Experiment, which it ſhall pleaſe the Wiſdom of Providence to make upon us, is, not only to ſatisfy ourſelves, that there is no manner of Proportion between God and the World; but to accuſtom ourſelves continually to fix our Deſires and Affections entirely upon God. And, even when no Danger of Competition appears, conſtantly to be upon our Guard, that we ſuffer no very ſtrong and tender Impreſſions to faſten upon our Souls, which any Events or Apprehenſions in the Affairs of Life will otherwiſe not fail to make, with regard to the World. And for this Purpoſe there cannot a better Expedient be thought on, than to dwell much upon the Warning given us here, that theſe two Maſters are of differing and irreconcileable Tempers; that the Service of both is utterly incompatible; and therefore that good Heed is to be taken, leſt, by making too near

Approaches to the Service of the World, we inſenſibly looſen and damp our Affections for God. For otherwiſe, even when no ſuch Conſequence is intended, we may yet in Effect ceaſe to retain any longer to him.

2. Our Lord's *Second* Argument againſt inordinate Concern for the Things of the World is that Diſtruſt of God's good Providence, which it manifeſtly implies. For Prevention of which Sin we are here directed to two Conſiderations. What he hath already done for our Selves, and what he does continually for his other Creatures.

1. What God hath done already for us is intimated in thoſe Words, *Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?* If ſo, then He that hath Power to give the Greater, cannot want Power to give the Leſs; and He, that had the Goodneſs to beſtow Subſiſtence, will not fail to beſtow the Supplies without which we cannot at preſent ſubſiſt. Our Creation was the Work of his Almighty Power; and, to make us the more ſenſible of this, he hath reſerved to himſelf the Determination of many accidental Qualities in our Frame, which ſeem to be of no great Importance, except ſo far only as they ſerve for Diſtinctions between one Man and another. And yet in theſe, in Appearance ſmall and inconſiderable, Circumſtances of our Bodies, if all our Endeavours are not, as manifeſtly they are not, able to produce the leaſt Alteration; (not *to add one Cubit to our Stature*, as our Lord here, *not to make one Hair of our Head white or black*, as he elſewhere expreſſes it) how vain an Imagination is it, to preſume, that our Solicitude is that, upon which the Preſervation of the whole Body muſt depend? How wicked, to ſuppoſe, that His Care, who deſcends to ſuch minute Particulars, will not concern itſelf for Matters of greater and much more neceſſary

Ver. 25.

Ver. 27.
Chap. v. 36.
Luke xii. 26.

neceſſary Conſideration? For the Being he gave us is an Effect of his Goodneſs, as well as of his Power: A Pledge that he will, no leſs than a Demonſtration that he can, ſuſtain us. The very Act of giving it did in Truth charge us upon Him for Maintenance; And therefore the Pſalmiſt's Connexion and Reaſoning is very juſt, *It is he that hath made us, and not we ourſelves: we are his People and the Sheep of his Paſture.* Had we made ourſelves; then indeed the whole Care of keeping ourſelves would in all Reaſon lie upon ourſelves: But in regard Another made us, it is but reaſonable he ſhould, and we have no manner of Ground to queſtion but he will maintain us. Pſal. c. 2.

2. To the Inferences made from the Things God hath done for ourſelves, we are commanded to add thoſe, which our own Obſervation of his Dealings with other Creatures will naturally ſuggeſt to us. His *feeding the Fowls of the Air*; which, as they are not qualified for, ſo it is plain they have no Need of, *ſowing* and *reaping*, and *gathering into Barns*; nor in Proportion, any of the provident Methods employed for the Supply and Preſervation of Mankind. His *cloathing the Lillies and Graſs of the Field*, with Ornaments and Beauty far exceeding all the Powers of Induſtry and Art. Theſe are plain Evidences, that he is never wanting to furniſh neceſſary Supports for every Sort of Being given by him. And therefore theſe juſtify our Dependence upon the like Care, ſince we are in the ſame Capacity and Relation to him; equally his Creatures, and therefore equally intitled to his preſerving Providence, as any of theſe are or can poſſibly be. Ver. 26. Ver. 28, 29.

But this Argument holds a great deal ſtronger, when we conſider, what an admirable Order God hath ranged his Creatures in; and what diſtinguiſhing Cha-

racters of Favour and Eſteem he hath vouchſafed to ſome of them above others. The Birds have indeed an Animal Life, but this is of no mighty Conſequence; the Flowers have a Vegetable Life only, are void of Senſe, and of very ſhort Duration: And yet even that Animal Life, which whether it continue long or not, 'tis no great Matter; and even this Vegetable Life, which never was intended, and is not in any Poſſibility to continue long; hath, ever ſince the Foundation of the World, been thought not unworthy the Care of Him that made them. But what Compariſon is there between the utmoſt Excellences of Vegetation and Senſe, and the Faculties of a rational Soul? Mankind are made after God's own Image, made capable of glorifying him by a voluntary Obedience here, made for the Enjoyment of Immortality hereafter; and therefore, as every wiſe and good Man does, ſo we have all the Reaſon in the World to believe that God does, proportion his Tenderneſs and Concern to the Value and Dignity of the Object. That, although every Sort of Beings be alike his Creatures, yet all do not ſhare alike in his Providence; but this is extended with a more eſpecial regard, to ſuch as are of a more excellent and durable Kind.

Nay the Argument runs higher ſtill, when it is remembered, that the Creatures here mentioned, were in great Meaſure deſigned for the Service and Entertainment of Mankind. Conſequently God, in taking Care of them, takes Care of thoſe to whom they miniſter Suſtenance and Delight. And we have Reaſon to interpret that Care, as a Kindneſs to our Selves. But nothing can be more abſurd, than that Infidelity, which ſees ſo ample Proviſion made for Creatures of the meaneſt Endowments, and very loweſt Quality, and at the ſame Time diſtruſts the Maker of it, for ſuch Proviſions as are abſolutely neceſſary, for Creatures *much better than they*. For them, to whom he hath given

given Dominion over the reſt: Them, for whoſe Uſe the reſt are created. That the reſt want nothing for them is plain; ſo that to ſuppoſe, we ſhall be as well dealt by as they are, might ſuffice to compoſe all uneaſy Solicitude for the Things of this World. But we have a great deal more for it: For to ſuppoſe, that we ſhall be dealt by *but as well as they*, is an unbecoming, and very faulty, Reflection upon Providence. Our Saviour's Manner of Reaſoning declares it ſo to be, *Wherefore if God ſo clothe the Graſs of the Field, which To-day is, and To-morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not* much more *clothe you*, O ye of little Faith? Ver. 30.

3. A *Third* Argument againſt ſuch inordinate Concern, is its Inconſiſtence with the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion. Many among the Heathens were wholly ignorant, and none of them had a right Underſtanding, of the Nature and Providence of God. In them therefore that Solicitude was excuſable; becauſe it ſuited the Condition of Men, who were of Opinion, that, knowing no ſuperior Power, whereon they might ſafely depend, or that did at all intereſt itſelf in their Affairs, it ſtood them in hand to look to themſelves. But Chriſtians are inſtructed, that the *Mercy of God is over all his Works*; that it is over Mankind eſpecially; that it is over good Men, after a ſtill more peculiar ſort; that *they who fear Him lack nothing*, and that *from them that live a godly Life he will withhold no manner of Thing that is good*. They are confirmed in theſe Aſſurances, by the Relation God vouchſafes to bear to them, ſuch as perceives and kindly conſiders their Wants. For the Affection of a *Father* cannot ſuffer Children to periſh in their Neceſſities: and the All-ſufficiency of a *Heavenly Father* cannot be deſtitute of Means to ſupply their Neceſſities. Chriſtians again are taught, not to ſet up their Hopes and their Reſt Pſal. cxlv. 9. —xxxiv. 9. lxxxiv. 12.

in this World, but to expect their Inheritance and Happineſs in another. If the *Gentiles* therefore who had none, or a very dim and confuſed Proſpect beyond the Grave, laid themſelves wholly out upon this only World they knew of; we are not much to wonder. But the Chriſtians principal Concern ought in all reaſon to be the ſecuring their Portion in that future Life; and for the preſent, ſo to attend upon their Duty, as may engage the Favour of God, and juſtify their contented Reliance upon all fitting Supplies in their Paſſage, by that *Godlineſs*, which *hath the Promiſes of both Lives*; and ſo will approve itſelf *profitable* to them, as well upon the Way, as at their Journey's End. All theſe Motives to a cheerful Truſt in the good Providence of God I take to be included in thoſe Words, *(after all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things; but ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you.*

1 Tim. iv. 8.

Ver. 32, 33.

4. A *Fourth* Argument againſt this inordinate Concern is the needleſs Trouble and Torment of it. The Torment is implied in the Original Word, which ſignifies not every ſort of Care, but that extreme Anxiety, which rends the very Heart and perplexes the Mind. The Concluſion whereof our Lord deſcribes in a very lively manner, by thoſe Queſtions of People diſtracted in their Thoughts, and not knowing which Way to turn them; *What ſhall we eat? What ſhall we drink? Wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed?* As if all were loſt and deſperate, and God could find no Way to furniſh them. The Needleſsneſs of that Torment is expreſſed by *taking thought for To-morrow*; haraſſing our Minds with Fears and Poſſibilities of Want hereafter: And heaping Sorrow and Labour upon our own Heads, by

Ver. 31.

by laying upon the preſent Time, which hath as much already as it can well bear, that Burthen which no Way belongs to it. Thus much is imported by our Lord's Command, deduced from his whole Diſcourſe upon the Subject. *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow, for the Morrow ſhall take Thought for the Things of itſelf: ſufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* Ver. 34.

From what hath been ſaid upon the *Firſt*, it is eaſy to diſpatch my *Second* Head in very few Words: by ſhewing, What Sort of Care is here forbidden, and What is not only allowed, but even expected from us.

1. That Care is certainly forbidden, which betrays a greater Love for the World, than for Almighty God. And this we may reckon done, by conſenting to any unlawful Means to promote our temporal Advantage; by retaining any Thing we are already poſſeſſed of, at the Expence of his Favour and a good Conſcience; by following our Worldly Affairs with Delight, and attending his Service with Wearineſs and Grudging; or, by wholly neglecting the Latter, rather than miſs the leaſt Opportunity of proſecuting the Former.

2. That Concern for the World is here forbidden, which puts us upon calling into queſtion the Power or the Goodneſs of God; which forgets to be thankful for Mercies already received, and which neglects the daily Inſtances of his Bounty to the World in general. And herein do all theſe querulous and deſponding Tempers very grievouſly offend, which murmur and complain of Providence; aggravate their Sufferings to Impatience and their Wants to Deſpair; as if there were no God that governs the World, or as if they were the only Things in the Univerſe diſregarded by him.

3. That Concern for the World is certainly forbidden, which makes us regardleſs of our Duty and

Eternity, which places all its Endeavours and Aims here below, and looks upon the preſent Advantages as its proper Happineſs. Such, as is not content to refer the Meaſure of theſe to the Diſcretion of that Father above; and acquieſces not in his Appointments; but had rather be Wealthy and Great, than Righteous; and is induced to Virtue, more for the Promiſes of this Life, than either for the Sake of its own intrinſic Value, or for the Rewards to be had by it in a future State.

4. That Concern again is forbidden, which is placed on Superfluities, and fixes a careful Eye upon Things a great Way off: Which will not let the Man enjoy himſelf, for fear he ſhould want ſeveral Years hence, or leſt his Family ſhould ſuffer for it, when he is aſleep in his Grave. Wretched Folly! As if God would not be the ſame powerful and good God then as now; and ſufficient to provide for thy Children, who hath ſo long and ſo plentifully provided for thee. In ſhort, under this Particular we may include all that Care of the Men, who are fretful and uneaſy, ſordid and niggardly, griping and uncharitable.

2. On the other Hand, if there be, as no doubt there is, and may be in any of us, ſuch a Concern to provide for ones Self and Family, as loves the World in Subordination to God, and would not, to gain it all, do any Thing to diſpleaſe him: A Mind, that diſpoſes us to ſerve God chearfully, to follow the Buſineſs of a lawful and uſeful Calling induſtriouſly and conſcientiouſly, to labour hard, and manage frugally, not becauſe we dare not truſt God, but becauſe we dare not tempt him; if there be in us a Concern for preſent Comforts, which ſtill remembers, that there are yet much better and higher Things, to which theſe muſt give Way; and that the Proviſions it ſeeks are only the Recruits of a Traveller, not the Stores of a fixed Inhabitant: A Concern, laſtly, that permits a Man to enjoy his preſent Bleſſings, with Moderation,

and

and Thankfulneſs, and an even Temper; a Care, in the Purſuit of which he ſtill contentedly and chearfully truſts God for his future Subſiſtence: Is decent in his Expences, hoſpitable to Strangers, friendly to Neighbours, juſt to all, and charitable to the Poor: This is a Concern for the Things of the World, which our Bleſſed Saviour's whole Diſcourſe here contains not one Syllable againſt. A Care, which the Scripture, whereſoever Diligence and Frugality are recommended, and Sloth and Profuſeneſs diſcountenanced, plainly encourages and applauds: And which the Laws of Nature, of Human Society, and of Revealed Religion, all agree in demanding of us. And now, how can we conſider this Matter as it deſerves, and ſufficiently admire the Wiſdom of Religion in this kind Diſtribution of our Cares? For upon the whole, God forbids the making ourſelves uneaſy here, to prevent our being miſerable hereafter. That Care, which is of ſervice, he hath left us to purſue; and that, which can do us no Good, he hath commanded us to caſt upon him. That, which promotes the Uſe of our Reaſon, and chooſes the propereſt Methods for Succeſs, by preſerving our Minds in Steadineſs and Tranquillity, we are allowed; and of that, which brings Diſorder and Perplexity, and perfectly bereaves us of our Peace and our Conduct, we are debarred. In ſhort, God hath ſo tempered the Matter, that we may neither deſpair of his Bleſſing, nor preſume upon ſubſiſting without it. We are at full Liberty to uſe ſuch Means, as argue, not Deſpondency and Fear, but an honeſt Application to the Duties of our Station, and a willing Submiſſion to his Diſpoſal of Events. If therefore our Lives be uneaſy, let us remember who it is that makes them ſo; and not accuſe, either the Ordinances of God, or the Neceſſities of Nature, but only our own ſelves. For they are then only uneaſy, when we refuſe to follow the Directions of our Saviour,

our, by not ſerving God without Diſtraction in the one, and by not repoſing our Souls upon his Fatherly Care for all proper Supplies of the other.

The Sixteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

Eph. iii. 16, *&c.* O LORD, we beſeech thee, let thy continual Pity cleanſe and defend thy Church; and becauſe it cannot continue in Safety without thy Succour, preſerve it evermore by thy Help and Goodneſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Eph. iii. 13.

13. I exhort you by all Means not to be diſcouraged in your Duty, upon the Account of my Sufferings; of which you ought rather to be glad, becauſe they are a Proof of my Sincerity, and a Confirmation of the Truth of the Doctrine I preached among you.

13. *I Deſire that ye faint not at my Tribulations for you, which is your Glory.*

14. *For this Cauſe I bow my Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

15. Who made all the Faithful, *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, the Spirits already glorified and thoſe ſtill in a State of Trial, Sons of God, and ſo one Family, and Brethren to the Angels.

15. *Of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named.*

16. *That he would grant you according to the Riches of his Glory, to be ſtrengthened with Might, by his Spirit in the inner Man.*

17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts by Faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in Love,*

18, 19. That you may have a due Senſe of that infinite Love of God, the full Dimenſions whereof are too vaſt for any Mortal perfectly to comprehend;

18. *May be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height;*

19. *And to know the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth Knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the Fulneſs of God.*

that

that ſo ye may be endued with the higheſt Meaſures of all Spiritual Graces, of which your preſent Condition is capable.

20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think, according to the Power that worketh in us,*

21. *Unto him be Glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all Ages, World without End.*

COMMENT.

THIS Epiſtle is ſuppoſed to be written from *Rome*, in ſome Part of thoſe two Years, during which St. *Paul*, though a Priſoner, was yet allowed the Favour of *dwelling in his own hired Houſe, and of receiving all that came to him.* Acts xxviii. 30. The Portion of it, read To-day, conſiſts of two Parts; (1.) An Exhortation, And, (2.) A Prayer for ſuch Additions of Grace, as might enable the *Epheſians* to comply with that Advice. The Former we have at the 13th Verſe: The Latter is continued to the End of the Chapter.

1. The Matter of the Exhortation conſiſts in their *not fainting*, that is, not being ſhaken in the Conſtancy of their Belief, nor diſcouraged in the Practice of thoſe Chriſtian Truths, which he, when preſent, had taught among them. A Temptation very incident to weak Minds, when the Doctrine they had embraced lies under Perſecution; and then the Perſons from whom it was received, by falling under public Diſcountenance come to make ſo different a Figure, as that of St. *Paul* in Bonds at *Rome*, by the Inſtigation and prevailing Malice of the *Jews*, was from the ſame St. *Paul*, baffling the *Jews*, and working Miracles at *Epheſus*. Againſt this Temptation, which diſpoſes Men, from the Calamities or Diſgrace of a Teacher, to abate of their Eſteem for the Man, and the Matter taught by him; and ſo to ſeek Pretences for ſecuring themſelves, in caſe the Danger ſhould come nearer Home; he fortifies them,

them, by declaring, that his *Tribulations* were *for* them;
Ver. 13. and that they were *Matter of Glory* to them.

By ſuffering *for them* he means, that the very Thing, which rendered his *Jewiſh* Enemies implacable, was his aſſerting the Privilege of the *Gentiles*. For this he did, by arguing and maintaining openly, that God had, now under the Goſpel, laid aſide the Diſtinction, which formerly obtained, and (as he expreſſes it) *made the*
Ver. 6. *Gentiles Fellow-heirs, and of the ſame Body, and Partakers of his Promiſe in Chriſt by the Goſpel.* Conſequently, to be now a *Jew* is ſo far from confining God's Favour to the Perſuaſion ſuch a one is of, that it utterly excludes him from it: And to have been a *Jew* before, puts him that comes under this new Diſpenſation, upon no better a foot, than thoſe ſtand, who come into it from the very Dregs of Pagan Idolatry and Ignorance. Theſe Declarations the *Jews* might take Offence at, who diſdained ſuch a Levelling with People held by them in the utmoſt Contempt: But the *Epheſians*, who found their Account and Advancement in it, had Reaſon to cheriſh and be highly delighted with it. Conſequently, when this was the Provocation, they had a particular Intereſt in the Sufferings it occaſioned; and were obliged by Gratitude as well as Duty, to make the Apoſtle's Afflictions, for ſo boldly ſtanding by their Rights, a very forcible Argument for Courage and Perſeverance in that Faith, to which they ſtood indebted for their own Privileges. Upon the ſame Account he might very juſtly affirm, that his *Tribulations* were their *Glory* too. For what could do more Credit to their Pretenſions, than their Apoſtle's Sufferings in defence of them? Had he been never ſo peremptory in aſſerting theſe, during his Stay at *Epheſus* only; where the Perſons, whoſe Advantage was concerned, would be ready to protect him: This might have looked like an Artifice to ingratiate himſelf, by exalting them. But conſtantly to perſiſt in avowing

avowing the ſame Rights; doing it to the very Heads of thoſe Adverſaries who would leaſt endure it; ſubmitting to, and being in no Degree intimidated with, Inſults and Injuries, Violence and Tumults, Bonds and Impriſonment: This muſt remove all Ground of Jealouſy; and prove, that one ſo much in Earneſt was fully ſatisfied, not only in the Truth, but in the Conſequence, of the Principle he ſuffered for. This muſt in all Reaſon be a ſtrong Confirmation, not of that ſingle Point alone, but of all the Reſt in which he had inſtructed them. And the *Epheſians* might well think it an Honour done them, and an indiſpenſable Engagement to continue firm in their Profeſſion; after the higheſt Evidences of his Sincerity and Conſiſtence with himſelf, by whoſe Zeal their firſt Converſion to ſo advantageous a Faith had been effected, and the glorious Expectations, conſequent to that Converſion, ſo abundantly juſtified and eſtabliſhed.

Theſe Arguments are certainly well fitted for the Apoſtle's Purpoſe. But the beſt Arguments, in Matters of this Nature, cannot by their own Strength produce the intended Effect. Our *Collect* for the Day (alluding poſſibly to the Scripture now before us) acknowledges that *the Church* (and the ſame is true of every Member of it) *cannot continue in Safety without God's Succour*. His *Help and Goodneſs* are abſolutely neceſſary to *preſerve* us. Which they very often do, by giving Force and Efficacy to thoſe Arguments, by which our Teachers urge us to a neceſſary Care for preſerving ourſelves. St. *Paul* therefore, in the following Words, declares, that the Matter of this Advice to his People was likewiſe the Subject of his earneſt Petition to God. And here again we may obſerve, the Nature of thoſe Graces he aſked for them; and the End, to which he prayed the Grant of them might be ſerviceable. Theſe, with the Title given to God at the Beginning, and the Doxology at the End, make the

the Subſtance of the Remainder of the Epiſtle for the Day.

The general Matter of his Requeſt is, that they, *according to the Riches of God's Glory, might be ſtrengthened with Might by his Spirit in the Inner Man.* By the *Inner Man*, no doubt, is meant Mind or Soul; that inviſible, but eſſential and principal Part, which is contradiſtinguiſhed to the outward and viſible, our Body. Thus both are plainly in the ſame Text, where this Apoſtle recounting a great Variety of Afflictions, and the Supports he found under them, ſays, *We faint not, but though our outward Man periſh, yet the Inward Man is renewed Day by Day.* This *Inner Man* differs from the *New Man*, as the Faculty does from its Subject. The Latter is a Complication of Chriſtian Virtues and Graces; the Former is the Seat, in which they reſide and act. The Latter are the Inſtruments of our Change; the Former is that Part, upon which the Change is wrought: They renew, this is *the Spirit of the Mind renewed* by them.

Ver. 16.

2 Cor. iv. 16.

Chap. iv. 24, 25.

St. *Paul* prays therefore, that the Holy Ghoſt would convey into the Minds of his *Epheſians* ſuch Additions of Divine Grace, as might be a ſufficient Preſervative againſt Temptations and Infirmities; that he would increaſe their Abilities to reſiſt and overcome, in Proportion as their Conflicts and their Neceſſities increaſe; which he calls *ſtrengthening with Might*; and that this might be in ſuch Abundance, as is anſwerable to the exceeding Greatneſs of that Power which enables, and of that Goodneſs which diſpoſes God to Liberality, in ſupplying all the Exigencies of his faithful Servants. For ſuch Exuberance of Bounty, I conceive, is meant by the Strength of the Spirit being diſtributed, *according to the Riches of his Glory.*

The

The Effects of which are, (1.) *Chriſt's dwelling in their Hearts by Faith.* Our Lord had ſaid, *If a Man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him*; and St. *Paul*, in the Cloſe of the *Second* of this Epiſtle, ſays, Chriſtians *are builded together for an Habitation of God through the Spirit.* From hence it appears, that the Communication of the Grace of that Spirit, which is inſeparable from the Father and Son, is the Manner of their *dwelling in* Mens *Hearts.* But this muſt not be underſtood of every Sort of Communication; but of ſuch a plentiful and permanent one, as anſwers to a fixed Abode. When Chriſt takes entire Poſſeſſion of us, and all our Affections are ſubject and devoted to him: When our Faith is firm and conſtant, and the only Principle whereby we are governed; ſo as to value and deſire nothing, in compariſon of what he would have us do, and what he hath promiſed to give us.

John xiv. 23.

Eph. ii. 22.

(2.) This is followed by *being rooted and grounded in Love*, that is, ſo fervent a Love of God, as (like a Tree that is ſet deep, and hath taken ſtrong Hold, or a Houſe whoſe Foundation is broad and firm and well wrought) is not to be ſhaken by the moſt violent Storms of Adverſity and Perſecution. And, that the Firmneſs here mentioned may be effectually attained, he prays, that they may be able to *comprehend* the vaſt Dimenſions of God's Love to them. The wonderful Mercy of redeeming the World by the Death of his Son, the boundleſs and ſurpriſing Mercy of admitting all Mankind (*Gentiles* as well as *Jews*) to the Knowledge, and to every Benefit, of this myſterious Love. Which when St. *Paul* declares to be ſuch as *paſſes Knowledge*, and yet at the ſame Time begs that they may *know it*, the ſeeming Inconſiſtence of theſe Expreſſions may be accounted for, as follows. Either, (1.) That this is the moſt excellent Subject that the Thought can dwell upon, and more worthy their Study,

Study, than any other Sort of Knowledge whatſoever: Or, (2.) That this is a Subject too large and lofty for Human Powers to know, and can only be known by the ſupernatural Illuminations of God's own Spirit: Or elſe, (3.) (as the Word *know* is ſometimes applied to the Affections and not to the Underſtanding only) that a deep, affectionate, and thankful Senſe of a Mercy, which mortal Men cannot conceive the full Value and Extent of, may inflame them with ſo fervent a Love in return, as ſhall eſteem nothing too much to be done or ſuffered for the Service of him, who hath ſo wonderfully loved them. A Love which ſhould put them upon aſpiring to the very higheſt Pitch of Piety and Virtue and Grace, that any mortal Men are capable of coming up to; and ſo of being *filled with all the Fulneſs of God.*

Matt. vii. 23. John x. 15.

These are Effects, ſo very extraordinary in themſelves, ſo very important to the Parties interceded for, that the Apoſtle thought it requiſite to mention the Perſon addreſſed to, under ſuch Characters as might ſatisfy his *Epheſians*, that they would not be aſked in vain. To this Purpoſe the Inclination to give is implied, in calling God *the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named.* For he who, without any Diſtinction or Reſerve, had admitted theſe Gentiles into equal Privileges with his once peculiar Children and People; and by his bleſſed Son had enlarged his Family, incorporated all Nations of Believers, all that ever were, or ſhould be, glorified Spirits in Heaven, into one Brotherhood and Body; could not be imagined backward in granting any ſpiritual Aſſiſtances, which might be uſeful and neceſſary for accompliſhing theſe kind Intentions toward them. And, though the Effects mentioned here require a very ſtrong Operation; yet, to take off all Apprehenſions from that Quarter, he declares, that God, *by the Power that worketh in us* (the invincible Force

Ver. 14, 15.

Ver. 10.

Force of his Holy Spirit in our Hearts) can, if he pleaſe, do not only what St. *Paul* had here prayed he would do, but *exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think.* So reaſonably might they hope, not only for theſe, but even for greater Bleſſings and Graces, if God ſhould ſee ſuch to be needful, and proper for their Circumſtances.

The Uſes, fit to be made of this Scripture, are ſeveral. Particularly, We ſhould learn from hence, Not to think at all the worſe of good Perſons and good Principles, when they fall under Diſcountenance or Perſecution: We ſhould indeed confirm our Adherence to ſuch, by conſidering the Advantages accruing to the Truth, from the Oppoſition of its Enemies, and the Sufferings of its Friends. We ſhould acknowledge our Conſtancy in theſe, and our Virtue in all Caſes, to be God's Gift; and conſider the Strength, by which we ſtand, not as our own, but his. We ſhould be perpetually labouring to poſſeſs our Hearts with a more and more vigorous and thankful Senſe of the Mercies we enjoy by *Jeſus Chriſt*; and to make our Love and Zeal for ſo gracious a Father and Benefactor, as fervent, as conſtant, as dutiful as may be. And what Aſſiſtances ſoever we want for theſe Purpoſes, we are here inſtructed where to apply for them; what Encouragements we have to aſk, and what Aſſurance to receive. Which when it is our Happineſs to do, St. *Paul* is, in the *laſt* Place, our Example, for rendering Thanks to him, who, becauſe he hath laid the Foundations of a Church to endure throughout all Ages, ought certainly to have *Glory* given him *in the Church throughout all Ages, by Chriſt Jeſus.* Amen.

The Sixteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke vii. 11.

11. *AND it came to paſs the Day after, that Jeſus went into a City called* * *Nain; and many of his Diſciples went with him, and much People.*

12. *Now when he came nigh to the Gate of the City, behold, there was a dead Man carried out* *, *the only Son of his Mother, and ſhe was a Widow: And much People of the City was with her.*

13. *And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto her, Weep not.*

14. *And he came and touched the Bier (and they that bare him ſtood ſtill) and he ſaid, Young Man, I ſay unto thee, Ariſe.*

15. *And he that was dead ſat up, and began to ſpeak: And he delivered him to his Mother.*

16. *And there came a Fear on all: And they glorified God, ſaying, That a great Prophet is riſen up among us* *; *and that God had viſited his People.*

17. *And this Rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the Region round about.*

PARAPHRASE.

11. A * ſmall City in the Tribe of *Iſſachar*, not far from the leſſer *Hermon*.

12. * It not being lawful for the *Jews* to bury within any of their Cities, becauſe all dead Bodies were by the Law unclean.

15. By virtue of that Divine Power, wherewith this authoritative Command was attended,—He that was dead——

16. * That God had now ſent the Meſſiah indeed. See this Phraſe manifeſtly ſo uſed, *Luke* i. 68.

COMMENT.

THE Miracles of our Bleſſed Maſter are generally Works of Mercy and Compaſſion. That of this Day is eminently ſo; there being few, if any Inſtances that called for them, which the Evangeliſts have repreſented in Circumſtances more fitted to move Pity. The Parting with a beloved Child is at any Time an Affliction,

Affliction, which in tender Mothers ſtirs a very ſenſible Concern. But when Time and Acquaintance have endeared their Converſation; when we have not only enjoyed the Diverſions of their Childhood, but the Promiſes of their Youth; when we have begun to conceive juſt Hopes of their Attainments and Proſperity, after that a few Years more have ripened them for the World; all theſe Conſiderations add Weight to the Blow.

But that, which here drove it deeper, is, that this *Young Man was the only Son of his Mother:* No Remnant left behind to mi- Ver. 12. tigate or to ſupply the Loſs; no Remembrance of her Travail left, but that moſt uncomfortable one, of Fears and Pangs undergone, to encreaſe the Number of the Dead, and her own Sorrows.

And yet the moſt melancholy Aggravation is ſtill behind. Which St. *Luke* therefore reſerves for the *laſt* Place, by acquainting us, that *ſhe was a Widow.* A State, of all others the moſt friendleſs and forlorn; and for this Reaſon frequently mentioned in Scripture, as that, which God receives into his more peculiar Protection. If any other Comfort belong to this Condition; it ariſes commonly from the Children, which God hath ſpared. Theſe are ſo many living Images of a deceaſed Father; they ſucceed into his Cares, and in ſome Meaſure fill his Place, by comforting and aſſiſting a ſolitary Mother. Theſe are the Pſal. cxxvii. 5, 6. *Arrows in the Hand of the Giant*, which defend their aged Parents from Violence and Wrong: And, by enlarging the Intereſt of a Family, enable them to bear up againſt any Adverſaries that ſhall contend with them. But when the Quiver is empty, and theſe Arrows all broken and ſpent, how eaſy is it then to inſult over and to cruſh a weak Woman? She ſtands naked and expoſed, without any Help or Sanctuary, except in that Kind and tender God; who, in conſideration of theſe Miſeries and Dangers, engages that he will be, and, by his ready Relief to ſuch Per-

ſons, proves himſelf to be, their moſt affectionate Huſband, and never-failing Friend.

Such was the Caſe of this mournful Widow; bereaved of her Huſband, bereaved of her Son, in the Bloom and Vigour of Youth; when juſt at a Condition of repaying a Mother's paſt Tenderneſs and Trouble, by becoming the Stay and Support of her Age and her Infirmities. This Complication of Miſeries the merciful *Jeſus* ſaw, and felt, and relieved, by turning her Tears into Joy; and in an Inſtant, by one commanding Word, delivered the Young Man back healthful and ſtrong to his Mother. This is the State of the Fact now before us; which very naturally ſuggeſts theſe two Reflections, for our Improvement and Advantage.

I. The Wiſdom of God, in ſometimes ſuffering his Servants to be driven to Extremities paſt all Human Help.

II. His Goodneſs in comforting and delivering them, when reduced to this deplorable State. With the Former Head I will content myſelf now; and ſhall ſpeak to the *Second*, upon a like Occaſion ſhortly.

Goſp. 24 *S. aft.* Trin.

I. Let us then at preſent obſerve the Wiſdom of God, in ſuffering his Servants ſometimes to be driven to Extremities paſt all human Help. That Queſtion of ſome *Jews* concerning *Lazarus* is equally applicable to this Youth of *Nain*. *Could not he, which opened the Eyes of the Blind, have cauſed, that even this Man ſhould not have died?* No doubt he could. It was in his Power to have prevented his Sickneſs, or to have checked the Beginnings of his Diſtemper, or to have given Succeſs to any Applications uſed for his Recovery, or to have called him back at the laſt Gaſp, and reſpited the Execution of the fatal Sentence upon him. He, who afterwards did much more, thereby ſhewed plainly, he could have done that which was leſs. So is it likewiſe in the Power

John xi. 37.

Power of God, to contrive us a ſmooth and eaſy Paſſage through the World; to ſecure us from Dangers and Calamities, as well as to ſupport us under them; to ſhorten our Afflictions, by bleſſing the Endeavours we employ to deliver ourſelves; nay, or to deliver us without our own Endeavours, by ſome wonderful Interpoſition of his good Providence.

But that, which God's Power can do, his Wiſdom often ſees fit not to do. He makes this Life a Valley of Tears to his Servants; he ſees them ſtruggle with their Diſtreſſes in vain; and when they feel their Impotence, and cry for Help to him their only Refuge, he ſeems to ſtand by unconcerned, and turn the deaf Ear: So that they cannot perceive any Inclination in him, to pity their Diſtreſſes, or to anſwer their Prayers; to bleſs ordinary Means, or to ſuccour them with Extraordinary.

And yet, as diſagreeable as all this Carriage may appear to the Notions of a God, whoſe brighteſt and darling Attribute is Mercy, and of a Providence univerſally watchful and kind; there is a very rational and fair Account to be given of it; ſuch, as may ſatisfy any, who will conſider the Ends of Affliction, and the Uſes it is deſigned to ſerve. For the Difficulty itſelf ſuppoſes, that none of thoſe Things happen to us by Chance. The very Ground of the Difficulty lieth in that Appearance of Contrariety, between the ſuppoſed Hardſhip of theſe Diſpenſations, and the infinite Goodneſs of that Being, at whoſe Diſpoſal they are confeſſed to be. Theſe therefore muſt be looked upon, not abſtractedly as they are in themſelves, but with reſpect to the Purpoſes they are appointed for. And, as ſuch, nothing more is needful to reconcile Men to them, than a Perſuaſion, *Firſt*, That the Ends they promote are deſirable and good, and worthy the wiſe Governor of the World; and *then*, that theſe are Means, exceeding proper for promoting thoſe Ends.

1. Look upon them as Remedies for the Cure of our Vices, the correcting our Paſſions, and giving check to thoſe luxuriant Appetites, which, like the peccant Humours in our Bodies, muſt be taken down by hard Uſage and Reſtraint: And thus the Continuance, or even the Increaſe of an Affliction may be as neceſſary, as the firſt Application of it. For as all Tempers and Diſeaſes are not alike, ſo it is impoſſible the ſame Doſe ſhould relieve every one alike. They who are of eaſy Conſtitutions, or whoſe Illneſs hath not taken deep Root, will be recovered by ſhort and gentle Methods. But if the Sickneſs have got head, and the whole Maſs be tainted, this Caſe requires a ſharp and long Courſe. Thus, if a Man be of a good flexible Diſpoſition, willing to hear Reaſon, content to be told his Faults, and upon a Correction inclined to do better; a ſmall Meaſure of Adverſity will ſuffice to bring him to himſelf. But if the Heart be tough and ſturdy, naturally ſtiff, or hardened by cuſtomary ſinning; it is not without great Difficulty, that ſuch a one is reclaimed. The Medicine then which failed at firſt giving, muſt be repeated and mixed ſtronger and ſtronger, till it take effect. And as it is no Reflexion upon the Good-nature of a Phyſician, to preſcribe very painful Remedies; and not to ſpare for the Patient's complaining, when Life lies at Stake; ſo it would not be Kindneſs, but Cruelty in God, to be moved by the Prayers of his ſuffering Servants, ſo as to releaſe them, before their ſpiritual Health be recovered. Nay, in caſe a light or ſhort Affliction cannot make this Cure; it is even Pity and Tenderneſs to lay on more, and to let them lie longer.

2. Conſider Afflictions, *Secondly*, as a Trial of our Virtues, and a Proof of our Sincerity; and in this regard both the Weight and Continuance of them are very reconcileable to the Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs of God. For Rewards hereafter are proportioned to Services here: And there is not one Difficulty in the Diſcharge of our Duty, which

ſhall

ſhall be paſſed over unregarded at the laſt Great Day of Account. Since then our Sufferings are but for a *Moment* in compariſon, and the Advantage of them is *Eternal:* Since they are but *light*, and yet *work out for us a far more exceeding Weight of Glory:* We have Reaſon rather to bleſs, than to repine at the Severity of that Diſcipline, which, by brightening our Virtue, contributes at the ſame Time to the brightening our Crown. Now this is a Gracious Purpoſe, not to be brought about by ſlight and ſhort Calamities. For it requires but moderate Attainments in Piety, to manage a ſmall Adverſity, if it endure long; or a ſharp one, if it paſs quickly off. But that, which diſtinguiſhes the True and the Brave Chriſtian from the Counterfeit or the Vulgar one, is Patience and Perſeverance; bearing up and being *Faithful unto the End*; never fainting, never growing weary of doing well and ſuffering Evil, in any Inſtance of Duty, which the Will of his Great Maſter ſhall think fit to require from him. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Theſe two Reaſons are of very great Weight; ſufficient to ſilence any Murmurs againſt an afflicting Providence, could they be fairly heard. For this ever deſigns either the Chaſtiſement of ſome Evil, or the Exerciſe and Improvement of ſome Good, in us. But I muſt own, there is yet another Reaſon for the Point I am upon, which appears to bear a much nearer Relation to the Circumſtances of this Miracle, from whence it was deduced. And that is,

3. *Thirdly*, The doing right to God's own Honour, by making Men duly ſenſible, how abſolutely they depend upon him, and whence it is, that all their Deliverances do really come. Now this is what we are exceeding apt to forget, and yet what is highly neceſſary to be remembered. So that we are not to wonder, if more than common Pains be taken to refreſh our Memories in ſo very material a Point. Had this young Man never been ſick at all; or had he been but

ſlightly indiſpoſed; the Preſervation of his Health would probably have been aſcribed to his Temperance, and the confirming of it, to early and prudent Care. Had the Diſeaſe grown dangerous, and the Cure in Appearance deſperate, but yet a Change had happened beyond all Expectation: Even thus God Almighty would have come in for but a ſmall Share. The Skill of the Phyſician, ſome ſeaſonable and ſovereign Remedy, Strength of Nature, a happy Criſis, or ſome ſuch poor Pretence, would have gone away with all, or far the greateſt Part, of the Glory. But when the Youth was actually dead, paſt all Remedies, and all Hopes; ſeen and known to be ſo, by his Neighbours, his Relations, his Mother above all; who cannot be thought to give her only Son up to the Grave, till his Death was paſt a Doubt: Then for reſtoring him there was but one Way remaining, even this amazing one uſed by our Saviour; ſuch as immediately proved its Author and his Omnipotence; ſuch as ſtruck all that ſaw it with Wonder and Terror; naturally put them upon *glorifying God*, and proclaiming to all the World, that he had now *viſited his People* indeed, in a very aſtoniſhing Manner.

The Circumſtances of Mankind in general bear no very diſtant Relation to the Caſe before us. Moderate Afflictions make but little Impreſſion; they are ſoon conquered and ſoon forgotten. The greater create much Uneaſineſs, and that Uneaſineſs awakens our Care: Yet ſtill, ſo long as Prudence and good Management ſtand us in any ſtead; ſo long we are inclined to flatter ourſelves with the Credit of our Eſcape. But when the Waves are ready to ſwallow us up, when the Pilot's Skill and the Mariner's Toil are of no farther Uſe, and all we can do with the Veſſel, is to let her drive; if then (as *David* expreſſes it) after *his Indignation* hath *lain hard upon us*, and *he hath vexed us with all his Storms*, God do, by ſome ſurprizing Providence,

Pſal. lxxxviii.

draw

draw us out of *the Deep*, that *we ſink not*, and *ſet us upon our high Places*; all Heaven opens, the Divinity diſplays itſelf clearly, and every one that ſees it, preſently cries out, *This hath God done, for* they plainly *perceive that it is his Work.* Pſal. xvii. — xl. — lxiv.

Nor does this Reflection extend to ſuch Things only, as are above probable Means, and out of the Reach of Human Helps: But it teaches us alſo to make a right Judgment of other Inſtances, in which thoſe Means may ſeem to challenge a Part. It convinces us, that our utmoſt Care and Contrivance come ſhort; that we can neither advance, nor ſecure ourſelves, without the favourable Concurrence of the moſt High. It verifies the Pſalmiſt's Obſervation in the moſt ordinary Events of Life; that, *except the Lord build the Houſe, their Labour is but loſt that build it*; and *except his never ſlumbering Eye keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain.* — cxxvii. 1, 2. — cxxi. 4.

Thus we are referred to a higher, to the true Cauſe indeed of all our Succeſſes, and directed to aſcribe all to Him, who is the ſole Diſpoſer of all our Gifts. For our Diligence and Wiſdom he uſes only as His Inſtruments. And we muſt uſe them too, as ſecond and ſubordinate Means, to invite and qualify us for His Bleſſing. But that Bleſſing nevertheleſs it is, upon which the whole of our Affairs, and the laſt Reſult of every Thing, entirely depends.

This now I take to be a very natural and evident Inference from the Caſe under our preſent Conſideration; and ſuch as implies too, that we are obliged to Patience and Submiſſion, in all God's Appointments concerning us. Grievous to human Nature Sufferings muſt be; but the Glory of God, and our own Good, are Ends, which ought to be an Over-balance to any natural Averſions or Infirmities. He who ordains them, does not want Affection for us. He will impoſe no Hardſhips upon his Children, that might conveniently

ently be ſpared; and therefore the ſame Reaſon holds, for acquieſcing in the ſharpeſt Extremities, as in the ſhorteſt and lighteſt of our Troubles: For His Appointment is as much concerned in the Degree and Duration, as in the Kind and Purpoſe, of our Sufferings. This Obligation holds too in Proſpect of increaſing our Reward in another and better World. But it frequently happens, that we are not left to ſuſtain ourſelves with ſo diſtant a Comfort. For this Paſſage, I took Notice, ſuggeſts a *Second* Obſervation, concerning *The Goodneſs of God, in comforting and delivering his Servants, when reduced to the moſt deplorable Circumſtances:* Which will find a fit Opportunity for being conſidered hereafter.

Goſp. for 24 S. after Trin.

The Seventeenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

Eph. iii. 16, *&c.* *Phil.* ii. 13.

LORD, we pray thee, that thy Grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good Works, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Eph. iv. 1.

1. I therefore, who am in Priſon for the Sake of Chriſt and his Goſpel, conjure you to live like Men, ſenſible of the Bleſſing, and agreeable to the Profeſſion, of Chriſtianity.

1. *I Therefore, the Priſoner of the Lord, beſeech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called.*

2. Be humble and gentle, patient under Injuries, not Angry nor Contentious.

2. *With all Lowlineſs and Meekneſs, with Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in Love.*

3. Labouring to preſerve Concord and Unity in Opinion and Judgment, by this Unity of Affection.

3. *Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

4. *There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling;*

4. To which theſe that follow are indiſpenſable Obligations; that the Church of Chriſt is one Body; that his Spirit is as the one Soul animating that Body; that we all aim at, and expect in one Reward;

5. *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm,*

5. Acknowledge one Maſter, profeſs one Faith, are initiated by one Baptiſm.

6. *One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

6. Are Sons of the ſame Father, whoſe Majeſty is over all, whoſe Providence orders all, and whoſe Graces are in you all.

COMMENT.

THE Epiſtle conſiſts of Two Parts. The *Firſt*, An Exhortation to ſuch Diſpoſitions and Behaviour (more particularly toward each other) as becomes Chriſtians. The *Second*, A Deſcription of that Unity in the Church, which is the great Enforcement of St. *Paul*'s Exhortation. The former I have had Occaſion to treat of ſo frequently, and of the Latter ſo fully on the *Firſt Sunday* after *Epiphany*, that I cannot think it needful to detain my Reader any longer upon them at this Time.

The Seventeenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke xiv. 1.

PARAPHRASE.

1. *IT came to paſs, as Jeſus went into the Houſe of one of the chief Phariſees to eat Bread on the Sabbath-day, that they watched him.*

1. Going to dine with a Ruler of the firſt Quality, by Sect a Phariſee, Jeſus was very narrowly obſerved by ſeveral of the Company, how he would behave himſelf upon the following Occaſion.

2. *And behold there was a certain Man before him which had the Dropſy.*

3. *And Jeſus anſwering ſpake unto the Lawyers and Phariſees, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?*

4. *And they held their Peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go:*

5. *And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an Ass or an Ox fallen into a Pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath-day?*

5. 'Tis true, doing Cures on the Sabbath is what I have often been blamed by you for; and yet you yourselves make no Scruple to do Acts of Mercy in much less important Cases.

6. *And they could not answer him again to these Things.*

7. *And he put forth a Parable to those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief Rooms, saying unto them,*

8. *When thou art bidden of any Man to a Wedding, sit not down in the highest Room, lest a more honourable Man than thou be bidden of him,*

9. *And he that bad thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this Man Place; and thou begin with Shame to take the lowest Room.*

10. *But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest Room; that when he that bad thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have Worship in the Presence of them that sit at Meat with thee.*

11. *For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*

11. My Design in this Parable is to let you see, that Humility is commended and respected by God and Man; and that to assume more than one's due, is the certain Way to lose what one aims to get by it.

COMMENT.

ONE great Reason why many, who read Scripture History very much, do yet make Improvements, by no Means answerable to their Time and Pains, is certainly this; that Men usually content themselves with a general Knowledge of Facts related there, without descending to a nice Examination of the Circumstances, and the Manner of performing those Facts. Whereas here it is chiefly, that the Beauty and Advantage of all History lies; these, rightly

rightly judged and aptly applied, are the Parts, beſt qualified to inform our Underſtanding, to ſeaſon all our Converſation with Prudence, and all our Behaviour with Decency.

To be told, for the Purpoſe, as here we are, that our Lord healed a Man ſick of the Dropſy; what is this, added to his other Miracles, but as a ſingle Drop to the Ocean? But to diſcern, and make proper Remarks upon, his Conduct in that whole Affair; with what Precaution and Management, with what Courage and Reſolution, with what Condeſcenſion and Temper he proceeded: This is of great and general Uſe, and may prove an excellent Pattern in our Lives and Converſations. Theſe therefore I deſign at preſent to inſiſt upon. And that, not meerly for the ſake of thoſe Rules and Reflections, which may be gathered from the Words now before us; but in hopes, by the Pregnancy of this One Paſſage, to engage your more curious Attention to others of the like Nature.

To ſet this Matter clear; Let it be obſerved, that as our Lord was to dine with a Phariſee of ſome Eminence, the Company *watched him:* With a malicious and wicked Intent, no doubt, to make ſome Advantage from this treacherous Civility of Theirs. Two Things concurred to cheriſh ſuch Expectations; the Preſence of a Dropſical Man, and its being the Sabbath-Day. Hence naturally would ariſe this Difficulty, that, either by forbearing to heal at that Time, *Jeſus* would betray his Fear, and ſtrengthen their Superſtitions with regard to ſuch Ritual Obſervances; or elſe, by doing it he muſt incur the Cenſure and Odium of a Sabbath-breaker, and a Contemner of the Law. He, who was well aware what Spies he had upon him, ſo ordered the Affair, as to accompliſh what he ſaw fit, without any Opportunity given for his Enemies to compaſs their Ends by it. In the Wiſdom of which Management each of the *Verſes* juſt now read, furniſhes a Particular, well worthy our Imitation.

I. The

I. The *First* is, A prudent Caution not to give Offence to them, who, we know, are apt and willing to take it. For ſo did *Jeſus*, by prefacing his Cure with that Queſtion, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-Day?*

Ver. 3.

II. The *Second* is Reſolution in doing Good, when we have Power and a fit Opportunity; though ſenſible that Offence is likely to be taken, or that ſuch Good may bring us into ſome Danger. For, though thoſe pretended Oracles of the Law *held their Peace*, and in wicked Subtlety would determine nothing; yet *Jeſus took the ſick Man, and healed him, and let him go.*

Ver. 4.

III. The *Third* is Condeſcenſion and Meekneſs: Not inſiſting too rigorouſly upon being in the right, nor ſatisfying ourſelves always with that; but taking all fit Occaſions, to vindicate our Actions from Offence, though never ſo unreaſonable, never ſo unjuſtly taken. And thus our Lord defends his whole Proceeding, from the *Jews* own Practice, and that Tenderneſs to brute Beaſts, which they made no Scruple of expreſſing by all Inſtances of ſeaſonable Reliefs, even on the Sabbath-Day.

Ver. 5.

I. I begin with our bleſſed Saviour's Caution, not to give Offence to them, whom he knew apt and willing to take it. This I gather from his putting firſt that Queſtion, whether it were *lawful to heal on the Sabbath-Day*. It is not to be thought, this Caſe was put to ſatisfy any Scruples in our Lord, concerning the Lawfulneſs of that Action. But by offering thus to argue the Point, he deſigned to gain an Advantage from their inſidious Silence which could not have been had by not putting the Queſtion at all. This took off all Imputation of Raſhneſs, and Obſtinacy, and Peremptorineſs in his own Opinion. The Act of Healing had been equally lawful without it; but the Manner of it had not been equally prudent. And hence we ſee, that our Lord,

Ver. 3.

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in his Behaviour, did not only conſider what in ſtrictneſs might be done; but what would look well, and how every Thing might be ordered ſo as to look beſt, when it was done.

This then is an admirable Precedent for us to follow. It ſhews, what Reſpect is due to the good Opinion of others, and what Care ſhould be taken for obtaining and preſerving it. No Motive, with reſpect to the Advantages of this World, could more powerfully recommend the Practice of Virtue, than, that it procures *Favour and good Underſtanding in the Sight of God and Man.* Yet Prov. iii. 4. ſo perverſe are ſome, and ſo unlucky others, that even Virtue itſelf cannot always keep clear of Detraction and Contumelious Treatment. That Vice and ſhameleſs Lewdneſs ſhould meet with general Condemnation and Reproach, is highly reaſonable; becauſe ſuch Things bid Defiance to Religion and the Laws; they contradict and affront the ſober Senſe of Mankind; they are ſo vile in their Nature, and ſo pernicious in their Conſequences, that none can approve them without Guilt, or favour them without Cenſure. If therefore the Gall of invenomed Tongues would be content to ſhed itſelf upon the Profane and Profligate only; as our Wonder could not be great, ſo neither were the Matter very great; becauſe ſuch Men receive but the due Reward of their Evil Deeds. But every one, who knows the World at all, cannot but be ſenſible, that Defamation does not uſe to ſtop at manifeſt, no nor at ſuſpected Vice, but flies boldly at the Face of Virtue itſelf; and the moſt upright, the moſt circumſpect Chriſtians cannot abſolutely eſcape the Bitterneſs of the Slanderer and Backbiter.

This is deſervedly looked upon as a very grievous Misfortune; and is an Evidence, how unreaſonable, as well as uncharitable, the Perſons we have to deal with are. And ſo, generally ſpeaking, no doubt it

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is. But yet I dare not take upon me to ſay, that it is always ſo. For many good Men, who look upon theſe Evil-ſpeakings as a ſort of Martyrdom, which their Innocence is called to ſuffer, would perhaps, upon a nicer Examination of the Matter, find theſe many Times to be not altogether their Fate, but in ſome Degree their Fault. For there is a mighty Difference between approving ourſelves to God, and to Men. God ſees our Intentions, he accepts our Endeavours, He conſiders what it is we would do, he makes Allowances for what we cannot do. But our Brethren ſee the outward Circumſtances only, and form a Judgment from thence. They have neither a Faculty of diſcerning our Thoughts and Deſires, nor good Nature enough to allow for them, if they could diſcern them. They Reaſon backward; conclude a Fault in the Deſign from a Failure in the Means; and, when we can do no better, pronounce that we never intended to do better. In ſhort, to gain the Favour of God, it ſuffices that we be Innocent; to loſe that of Men, we need only be indiſcreet. So nice and tickliſh a Thing is Reputation; ſo great, ſo common a Difference we find, between a clear Credit, and a clear Conſcience.

Abundance of Defects, in truth, there are, which render even Piety and Virtue itſelf leſs agreeable and engaging to thoſe with whom we Converſe. If a Man's Zeal be intemperate and furious; if he be ſtiff, and ſo tenacious of his own Opinion, as to run all to Rigour and Extremity againſt thoſe of a contrary Judgment; if he be credulous and eaſy to receive Ill Impreſſions; if fierce and addicted to Diſpute and Contradiction; if he ſtretch Chriſtian Liberty to its utmoſt Point of Lawfulneſs, or be a ſeverer Cenſurer of them who carry it farther than himſelf; if, through want either of better Breeding, or of better Temper, he fail in the Reſpects or Condeſcenſions due to the Perſons, with whom he is concerned; if he be of a Diſpoſition inquiſitive and buſy, and apt to intermeddle

meddle in Affairs, not properly his: These and sundry other Mismanagements there are, of which Men, good in the main, are frequently guilty; that naturally raise a Spirit of Opposition and Prejudice, and cast a Blemish upon the honestest Intentions and most commendable Undertakings.

Now such Inconveniencies it should be every Man's Concern, to ward off, as well as he can. For we are often called upon in Scripture, to be *Wise* as well as *Harmless*; to *adorn* as well as to practise the *Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ*; to consider ourselves in the Midst of a *crooked and perverse Nation*, Enemies to Goodness, curious to find any Objections against it, and glad when they have found them: In a Word, after our Saviour's Example here, *to cut off Occasion from them that desire Occasion*; by giving all Diligence, not only, that what we do be good in it self, but so softened and recommended by Decency and Prudence, that even our Good may not be evil spoken of. For there is a Duty incumbent upon us, toward one another; toward even the Weak and Mistaken; toward even the Malicious and Ill-disposed; as well as to our selves, and to Almighty God. A Duty, not of equal Force it is confessed; for, when both cannot be pleased, God must be obeyed, tho' all Mankind be dissatisfied. And therefore, when all adviseable Measures have been taken, to render our Proceedings not only Harmless but Blameless too; if this will not conciliate Approbation and Esteem, we must follow our Saviour on a little farther, and take him for our Pattern of Courage, as well as Caution. For that is the

Matt. x. 16. Tit. ii. 10.

Phil. ii. 15.

2 Cor. xi. 12.

II. *Second* Remark upon the Words, Resolution in doing Good, when we have Power and a fit Opportunity, notwithstanding any Prospect of Offence to be taken, or Hazard to follow upon it. Thus, though the Pharisees *held their Peace*, out of a malicious De-

ſign to enſnare him; yet He, who without their Advice knew what was proper to be done, *took* the ſick Man, and *healed him, and let him go.*

Ver. 4.

To enſlave our Conſciences ſo far, as to do no Good, which will give Diſtaſte; were to debaſe and deſtroy Virtue, by ſubmitting it to the Opinion of Men. On the other Hand, to attempt the doing Good by an over-eager and impetuous Officiouſneſs; this, upon ſome Occaſions, turns to ill Account, both for ourſelves and for Religion. Hence it is, that, to having the Power, I added the having a fit Opportunity: Such a one, I mean, as a wiſe and good Man will judge favourable for obtaining the End of his Action. Hence that Rule of the Caſuiſts takes place, that the Negative Precepts oblige at all Times, but the Affirmative do not. For no Conjuncture of Circumſtances can ever make it warrantable to commit Evil; but many may bear us out in omitting Good: and ſo diſpenſe with that, which is evidently unſeaſonable and unprofitable, as effectually as if it were utterly impracticable.

Indeed, where plain Duty calls, and God, and our Conſciences only are concerned, no Excuſe ought to ſuffice us; becauſe the Acceptance and Effect of our Endeavours are, in ſuch Caſes, certain. But where that Acceptance and Effect muſt turn upon other People; there we are at Liberty to conſider the Probabilities of ſucceeding, and to employ or ſpare our Pains accordingly. Thus Brotherly Admonition and Reproof are very Chriſtian, very uſeful, and very kind Offices. And yet our Lord ſeems plainly to diſpenſe with them, when thoſe we have to treat with, are ſo brutiſh, as to *trample* ſuch *Pearls under Foot, and turn again, and rend us.*

Matt. vii. 6.

The winning over Proſelytes to the Faith of Chriſt is a Work, which one would think the Apoſtles under the higheſt Engagements inceſſantly to labour in. Yet even

even Theſe were directed, when One City would not receive their Inſtructions kindly, to leave it, and carry the Goſpel to another. The Ground of both which Caſes ſeems to be this: That others have then our Succeſs entirely at their Diſpoſal; that no Man is therefore bound to loſe himſelf in the Service of them, upon whom, after his utmoſt Care and Zeal, it will depend, whether any Service ſhall be done them, or not. For indeed, ſtrictly ſpeaking, when our Attempts may be rendered fruitleſs at the Pleaſure of thoſe we treat with; not only the Opportunity, but the Power to do Good is wanting. Matt. x.

The Inſtance now before us is of a Kind ſomewhat different from this; and therefore a proper Direction for our Behaviour, when ſome Good may be done, though at the Expence of Envy and Ill Conſtruction, the Malice of theſe Phariſees could not bind the Hands of Omnipotence, and the Cure of this Patient was an Act of Mercy, far an Over-balance to all their moſt invidious Reflections upon it. Cure him therefore *Jeſus* did; and he hath herein ſet us a Pattern, not to deſiſt from, or be diſcouraged in, Actions truly commendable and profitable, for any Thing the World ſhall ſay or think of us or them. What hath been already delivered on this Head will indeed juſtify our forbearing Attempts, which can do no Good at all; but, where ſome Good may be done, there we are to conſider, of what Proportion and Conſequence that Good is. And if upon laying all Circumſtances together, the Benefit be certain, the Inconvenience doubtful; the Good of great, the Evil of leſs Importance; the Good, what we are fairly called to do; the Evil ſuch as will never happen to us, except others do, what they ought not to do; then we are to caſt ourſelves upon God's Protection, boldly and bravely to diſcharge our Conſcience, and to truſt Him with the Event. The Argument, which acquits us

from tempting unſeaſonable, unprofitable, and conſequently unneceſſary Difficulties, is of no Weight to juſtify our Cowardice or our Sloth. It therefore highly concerns every Man to deal ſincerely with his own Breaſt, where Matters are left at large for Chriſtian Prudence to judge of: not to aggravate Hardſhips beyond the Truth; but to conſider, and determine, and act, as one ſenſible, that he muſt give an Account; and that, however Men, or even himſelf may, yet God is not, cannot be, mocked.

From Perſons arrived thus far, nothing more, one would imagine, ſhould be required. Caution not to give Offence before we act, and Integrity and Reſolution and Wiſdom in acting, ſeem to ſet us above Miſrepreſentation; and, that we might with a generous Contempt look down upon any impotent Cavils and Aſperſions, that may be caſt at us. Yet ſo did not the Bleſſed *Jeſus:* He ſet us alſo

III. *Thirdly*, A Pattern of Condeſcenſion and Meekneſs, in vindicating this Action, from Offence, though moſt unreaſonable, moſt unjuſtly taken. To this Purpoſe he vouchſafes to argue the Point with the Phariſees, by urging their own Practice upon them, *Ver.* 5. *Which of you ſhall have an Aſs or an Ox fallen into a Pit, and will not ſtraightway pull him out on the Sabbath Day?* Upon Occaſions like this, nothing is more uſual, than for People to grow ſullen and peremptory; to alledge, with St. *Paul*, that *it is a ſmall Thing with them to be judged of Men, for he that judgeth them is the Lord.* And therefore ſo long as God and their own Conſcience accuſe them not, it is perfectly indifferent to them, how they, and their Actions are thought of; nor can they think an innocent Party concerned to give others the Satisfaction of demonſtrating that he is ſo. This is one of the falſe Meaſures, which even good Perſons are ſometimes apt to take; and that it is a falſe one, I deſign this Particular for a Proof.

1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

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That our Duty requires a very tender Regard to the Opinion of our Brethren, and cannot be ſatisfied with the approving our Sincerity to God alone; is evident from the expreſs Precepts, from the moſt engaging Examples in Holy Scripture, and indeed from common Reaſon and the Nature of the Thing. The Phariſees had no Right to cenſure this Miracle of Chriſt; nor was there any juſt Matter of Cenſure in it; and yet He, who neither owned the Authority nor the Equity, of any Sentence they ſhould paſs, thought it convenient to clear an Action in itſelf Good from the very Jealouſies and miſtaken Imputations of Evil. The Method propoſed by St. *Peter*, for quieting Slanderers and Detractors, is not the ſetting at naught their Ignorance and Falſhood, but the being ready to juſtify our own Conduct and Principles, and putting *them to Silence by well-doing*. What infinite Pains do we find taken by St. *Paul*, to ſet all right, and to be well with his *Corinthians?* And yet this is the very St. *Paul*, who, at other Times, diſdains all falſe and diminiſhing Reflections, objects to the Juriſdiction of this lower Court, and declares he is to ſtand or fall by his own Maſter in Heaven. So careful were theſe eminent Patterns to *provide*, as one of them expreſſes it, *Things honeſt, not only in the Sight of the Lord, but alſo in the Sight of Men*; and to preſerve *a Conſcience void of Offence* towards Both. Which exceeding Wearineſs leſt we ſhould imagine a Virtue neceſſary for ſuch publick Characters only, that noble and excellent Rule of the *Philippians* hath expreſſed this Duty in Terms of univerſal Extent. *Finally, my Brethren, whatſoever Things are true, whatſoever Things are pure, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are of good report; if there be any Virtue, and if there*

1 Pet. ii. 15. —— 15, 16.

2 Cor. viii. 21. Acts xxiv. 16.

Phil. iv. 8.

be any Praiſe, think on theſe Things. The Motives here propounded are plainly of two Kinds. The Truth, the Juſtice, the Purity; theſe have reſpect to the real intrinſick Worth, or, as he ſtiles it in the End of the Verſe, the *Virtue* of the Action: Then follow the Honeſty, the Lovelineſs, the Good Report, all of them comprehended in the *Praiſe* of the Action. But ſure, if each Inducement did not bind us; it had been moſt abſurd ſo ſolemnly to join them, and to have made the one a Rule and Principle of doing well, no leſs than the Other.

Hence I take it to be very evident, that many Things oblige us, on the Account of the Credit and Commendation belonging to them, though not poſitively preſcribed by the Written Laws of God or Man. And, that all ſuch Pretences are frivolous and weak, as would countenance and ſupport Licentiouſneſs; by pleading, that ſuch Liberties or Indulgences are no where forbidden, and never therefore to be proved directly ſinful. For if they bear ill in the World, and naturally expoſe a Man to Cenſure and Diſrepute; there needs no farther Deliberation in the Caſe: Then although there be no Vice, yet ſuppoſing Diſpraiſe to be in them, the neceſſary Conſequence of St. *Paul*'s Exhortation is, *Think not on thoſe Things.*

Again, if an Action be deſirable, becauſe it is Virtuous only, or Lovely only; we are certainly to employ our beſt Endeavours for rendering it both: So to be *pure* and *juſt*, as likewiſe to be of *good Report:* Not to defraud Virtue of the Commendation due to it, by humourſome Pride, or Imprudence, but to be extremely ſolicitous for its good Acceptance. And, if it happen to be miſtaken through Ignorance, or miſconſtrued through Envy; to labour hard in its Juſtification. For all Obloquy is certainly an Unhappineſs, not only to the Good Man, but alſo to Goodneſs itſelf. And therefore it is a Kindneſs, it is indeed a

Juſtice

Juſtice to both; that Things *good* in themſelves may not loſe the Advantage of coming abroad with a *good Report*.

There is, I confeſs, a Time when we are allowed to retreat within our own Breaſts, and ought to take Sanctuary there. If Men would diſcourage and affright us from our Duty, what the Word and Providence of God plainly require at our Hands; we are not to be terrified by their Malice, or value their Reflections one whit. But this always ſuppoſes the Duty to be plain; and the utmoſt, that may be, to have been done, for preventing ſuch Diſpleaſure and Miſinterpretation. If all that can be done, prove ineffectual to theſe Purpoſes; we then muſt, and very well may be ſatisfied, with the Approbation of Almighty God, and the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience. But ſtill, where God and Man both can be ſatisfied; if we do not ſatisfy both, ſo much as we neglect in order to it, ſo much we abate of the Cenſurer's Guilt, and of our own Comfort. The World is envious and ill-natured at the beſt; full of Tongues and Thoughts, never to be reſtrained from the Exerciſe of a Freedom, which by no Means becomes them. The cleareſt Virtue is ſcarce a ſufficient Defence: And, after all our Guard and Circumſpection, we ſhall find Occaſion more than enough for the laſt Refuge of a good Conſcience; and ſhall meet with People in abundance diſpoſed to Detraction and Cenſure; who, ſometimes for the moſt innocent of our Actions, will neither be perſuaded by all we can do, nor convinced by all we can ſay. But to God and their own Conſciences be that, not to any Fault or Neglect of ours.

Yet here again I would be underſtood of ſuch Juſtification, as is prudent and proper. For even our Saviour himſelf did ſometimes reject Cavils and Calumnies with Indignation, and would not afford them the Satisfaction of an Argument. And there is really an Inconvenience in the other Extreme; an exceſſive officious Solicitude does rather increaſe than remove the

Suſpicion of Guilt. For, as ſome Occaſions are of Importance to require our Defence: So there is a Malice to that Degree froward, and frivolous, and impertinent; that the beſt Way of ſetting ourſelves at Eaſe, is to let it ſpend itſelf; and the moſt effectual Anſwer to its Scandals is by Silence and Scorn.

Mean while, when Argument is ſeaſonable, we ſhall do well to imitate our Bleſſed Maſter's Prudence in the Choice of it. He might have diſcourſed very nicely upon the Nature, the Inſtitution, the End of the Sabbath; that a Reſt meant for the Refreſhment and Benefit of Mankind, could not poſſibly oblige to an abſolute Ceſſation from Works of Neceſſity and Charity, becauſe this would tend directly to the Prejudice and Deſtruction of Mankind. But he rather chooſes to turn their own Practice upon them. And this in Truth is the Method of treating violent and ſelf-conceited Men. To accommodate our Diſcourſe to their Paſſions and Intereſts; to ſhew the unreaſonable Creatures to themſelves: For ſuch are immoderately fond of their own Doings, and will be tender in condemning the Meaſures of their Brethren; when made ſenſible, that there is no Remedy, but they muſt at the ſame Time, and in the ſame ſame or a greater Degree, condemn thoſe taken by themſelves. Such an Inſtance either wins them over to our Favour, or at leaſt it ſtops their Mouths; and puts them more effectually out of Countenance, than all the dry Reaſoning in the World. For in this Effect and Succeſs alſo our Saviour is our Precedent. This ſo ſenſible Application to the Phariſees own Example (equalling, and, as is uſual with Men of that Temper, even out-doing the very Thing they ſo ſeverely blamed him) touching them ſo cloſe, and ſo utterly confounded them, that the 6th Verſe acquaints us, *They could not anſwer him again to thoſe Things.*

The God of all Grace ſo *prevent* and *follow us*, with the ſeaſonable Aſſiſtances of his Holy Spirit; that, in theſe wicked and dangerous Days, all our Thoughts, Words and Works may be ſeaſoned and conducted with

with such Wariness and Prudence, such Firmness and Zeal, such Temper and Condescension; as may derive Honour upon his Holy Religion, promote the Salvation of our own Souls, and answer the Character of his Disciples and Followers, who is made to us *Wisdom*, as well as *Sanctification and Redemption*; *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. To whom, with the Father, and Holy Spirit, be Glory and Praise and Adoration, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen*. 1 Cor. i. 30.

The Eighteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

LORD, we beseech thee, grant thy People Grace to withstand the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and Devil, and with pure Hearts and Minds to follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

The EPISTLE.

1 Cor. i. 4.

4. *I Thank my God always on your behalf for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ*;

5. *That in every Thing ye are enriched by him, * in all Utterance, and in all Knowledge.*

6. *Even as the Testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.*

7. *So that ye come behind in no Gift: Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

8. *Who shall also confirm you unto the End, that ye may be blameless in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

PARAPHRASE.

5. * In a happy Facility of instructing others, and the understanding abstruse mysterious Doctrines, or ancient Prophecies.

6. The so clear Evidence of which Spiritual and Divine Powers is a Confirmation of the Doctrine of the Gospel.

8. He will not be wanting to multiply his Graces, and strengthen you yet more, that so you may be of the Number of them, who are absolved by him in the great Day of Account.

COMMENT.

THE Service, which this Portion of Scripture may do us, ſeems chiefly to conſiſt in theſe following Particulars:

1. To inſtruct us, by St. *Paul*'s Example, that it becomes all Chriſtians in general, but more eſpecially the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to be highly pleaſed with, and truly thankful for, the Spiritual Advantages, which the Bounty of God beſtows upon any of our Brethren. For none of theſe ought to be reckoned of private Importance, they are given for Uſe, and that Uſe converts them to the Benefit of the Public. They illuſtrate the Glory of the Almighty Giver, and advance the Kingdom of Chriſt among Men. And he cannot be a good Subject, who does not take Satisfaction in every happy Acceſſion to his Lord's Dominion and Power, by what Hand ſoever that Enlargement come. Eſpecially, when it is conſidered, how cloſely Chriſtians are united in one myſtical Body, of which our Lord is the common Head, and every Fellow-Diſciple a Member in particular; this mutual Relation renders it impoſſible, for the Benefits vouchſafed to any one Part, wholly to reſt and determine there. Not to feel them, is an Argument, that the animating Spirit hath withdrawn his Influences from the inſenſible Part; not to be delighted with them is monſtrous and unnatural; for ſo the Apoſtle argues in the *Twelfth* of this Epiſtle, concerning the Sympathy, that is in our outward, as an Intimation, what ought to be, in the inward Man.

See Epiſt. for 1 *S. aft.* Trin.

Ver. 26, 27. *Whether one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it; or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it. Now ye are the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular.*

2. The

2. The Wiſdom and Addreſs of St. *Paul* is very remarkable in chuſing to begin his Epiſtle after this Manner. The Church of *Corinth* valued the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit among them, even to a Degree of Vanity. Nothing could therefore be more acceptable than a due Commendation of theſe Gifts, and a Congratulation for the Bounty of God, no where in this reſpect more eminent, than in that Church. But the mutual Envyings and Emulations occaſioned by thoſe Gifts, was one of the crying Abuſes, intended to be rectified by this Epiſtle, and ſuch as would require St. *Paul* to deal very plainly with them afterwards. And therefore, to make thoſe Rebukes go down the better, at preſent he forbears any other Reproof, than what his own Example of doing the quite contrary included. The Concern and Thanks he ſolemnly expreſſes, for the diſtinguiſhing Graces of the Spirit, ſo liberally imparted to others, ſhewed, by what they ſaw him do, what it was that each of them ought to do. And ſure we never take a more becoming, more inoffenſive, more promiſing Courſe, for reforming the Errors and Follies of our People; than by thus obliquely reprehending their bad, by our own wiſer and better Example.

3. We learn from hence, that theſe Gifts are the Effect of Belief in *Jeſus Chriſt*. That, whether the ordinary, or the extraordinary, Graces of the Spirit be our Wealth, it is ſtill to Chriſt, that our being *enriched* ought entirely to be aſcribed: So again,

4. That the Gifts here ſpoken of are very fit Teſtimonies for confirming the Truth of the Goſpel: And,

5. That to thoſe who have received them, they are a Warning to expect, and prepare for, the Return of this King, who will certainly account with his Servants, for the Talents left with them, to be improved in his Abſence.

Theſe are Points which might be ſeaſonably enough diſcourſed on here, had

Epiſt. Whitſun. Mond. *Epiſt.* 12 S. *aft.* Trin. *Ep.*

and Gosp. 9 *S.* *Epist.* 10 *S.* had they not been ſufficiently handled before.

6. The Concluſion of this Scripture ſets us a Precedent, for a moſt comfortable Inference, to be drawn from the paſt Liberality of God to us; who begins with Grace, that he may end with Glory. But then this muſt be ſo underſtood, as to imply all thoſe Conditions which the New Covenant hath interpoſed, to qualify us for Additions of Spiritual Strength here, and for a Reward, upon the Improvement of it, hereafter. We may ſafely promiſe ourſelves, that God will not be wanting on his Part: But we have no Warrant to preſume, upon being either *confirmed* here, or *found blameleſs* at the Day of Chriſt, if there be no Care taken, not to be wanting on our Part. Something is expected from every one; more from each, as each hath received more Abilities. And the Conſequence of our Neglect to employ theſe, to the Profit of the Publick, and the Honour of our Maſter, is, not to be *confirmed*, but deſerted and confounded. The Talent, inſtead of being doubled, ſhall be taken quite away, and the ſlothful unprofitable Servant caſt into outer Darkneſs. All this is much more juſt in God, than any Parable can poſſibly repreſent; becauſe not only our Talents, but our Power to employ them rightly, are his Gift. And both are like Seed ſown in the Ground, which only, provided we take good heed to cultivate it diligently, will bleſs us with a large Increaſe. And when this Care is taken, though the beſt we do, or can do, will be allayed with Infirmities and Sins; yet we ſhall be *blameleſs*, i. e. ſuch as (according to the Allowances of the Goſpel) no Reproach or Fault ſhall be charged upon, *in the Day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*.

Matth. xxv.

The Eighteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. xxii. 34.

34. *WHEN the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus had put the Sadducees to Silence, they were gathered together.*

35. *Then one of them which was a* * *Lawyer, aſked him a Queſtion, tempting him, and ſaying,*

36. *Maſter, which is the great Commandment in the Law?*

37. *Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.*

38. *This is the firſt and great Commandment.*

39. *And the ſecond is like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.*

40. *On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

41. *While the Phariſees were gathered together, Jeſus aſked them,*

42. *Saying, What think ye of Chriſt? whoſe Son is he? They ſay unto him, The Son of David.*

43. *He ſaith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord, ſaying,*

44. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right Hand, till I make thine Enemies thy Footſtool.*

45. *If David then call him Lord, How is he his Son?*

46. *And no Man was able to anſwer him a Word, neither durſt any Man (from that Day forth) aſk him any more Queſtions.*

PARAPHRASE.

35. * A Doctor of Law.

37. Thou ſhalt love God above all Things, and all beſides, in Subordination to him. (See *Com.* on *Goſp.* for 15 *S.*)

39. (See *Com.* on *Goſp.* for 13. *S.*)

43. How then comes *David* to mention him as one greatly his Superior? This ſure is not agreeable to the common Manner of Fathers mentioning their Sons: And yet this he does, in that Pſalm prophetic of the Meſſiah, (*Pſal.* cx.)

46. This Enquiry did not only puzzle them at that Time; but put an End to all their troubling him with any more cavilling and enſnaring Queſtions.

COMMENT.

MY Deſign at preſent is to treat of the Excellence of Charity, or the Love of God and our Neighbour, by fixing upon that Character, given here of thoſe two by our Saviour, when he declares, that the Former is the *Firſt and Great Commandment*, and the Latter *the Second and like unto it.* Ver. 38, 39.

By *Firſt* and *Second* here no doubt is meant, that theſe Commands are ſo in Dignity and Importance, and merit the *Firſt* and *Second* Place in our Obſervance and Eſteem. And by the *Greatneſs* of the Commandment, I underſtand, not its Extent and Comprehenſion only; but its Excellence and Perfection, of which that Extent is but one out of many Inſtances. The Subject then to be enlarged upon is this; that the Love of God, and the Love of our Neighbour, are Duties, which of all others we are moſt highly concern'd to diſcharge. Yet ſtill in ſuch a Manner, that to the Love of God an abſolute Preference is due, and no Command whatſoever may ſtand in Competition with that: But then the Love of our Neighbour ſucceeds next; which is ſo very near of kin to the Former, ſo far Superior to all Engagements beſides, as in Order and Conſequence to give Place to the Love of God only.

Now the Perfection of any moral Law ſeems to be Relative, and principally to conſiſt in the Qualities of the Virtue it enjoins. Thoſe Commands therefore, which enjoin the moſt noble, the moſt reaſonable, the moſt uſeful Virtues, and ſuch as moſt conduce to the Happineſs of Mankind, are juſtly eſteemed above others; becauſe, as I ſaid, the ſubject Matter of the Law ſeems to be the Meaſure of the

the Goodneſs of the Law. In proof then of the Character given by our Saviour here, I am obliged to ſhew, *Firſt*, That the Love of God excels all other Virtues, in the ſeveral Reſpects juſt now mentioned: And then, *Secondly*, That the Love of our Neighbour, though it do not equal, does yet very much reſemble, and come nearer up to it than any other whatſoever.

1. *Firſt* then, Concerning that Command, which enjoins the Love of God. The Pre-eminence of this above all others is ſeen by its enjoining a Virtue,

Firſt, The moſt noble in itſelf. And that it does whether we regard the Matter, or the Object of it.

The Matter of the Command is Love. An Affection born in, and bred up with us; ſo agreeable to Nature, that it ſeems to be the reigning Quality of the Soul; the Root and Source of every other Paſſion, and the common Spring and Principle of all our Actions whatſoever. For we ſhould hate nothing, we ſhould envy no Body, ſhould be guilty of no Emulation, no Supplanting, no Injury to any other; were not this done in Tenderneſs to ourſelves; and from an Apprehenſion, that thoſe Perſons do ſome way obſtruct our Happineſs, or diſturb our Eaſe. So that even our bittereſt Animoſities and moſt violent Averſions, when ſtrictly conſidered, and traced back to their firſt Original, are at laſt all reſolved into this Principle of Love. To forbid this to any Thing, is in Effect to forbid it to be. Something we always do, we always muſt love: And the Buſineſs of Reaſon and Religion is, not to quench this Fire within our Breaſts, but to provide it with convenient Fewel: Not to root out the kindly Paſſion, which would unravel and deſtroy Nature; but to direct it to proper and worthy Objects which will exalt and perfect Nature.

And

And herein no Command can be comparable to this before us. For it does not only preſcribe an Act the moſt natural, the moſt neceſſary, the moſt noble in itſelf; but Places that act upon the beſt Object alſo. For ſuch, without all Controverſy, is God; the Foundation of, and Inducement to all Love, is Good; either Good in Reality, or at leaſt Good in Appearance. And the Fault we are commonly guilty of in this Matter, is either miſtaking Evil for Good, and ſo loving that, which ought to be hated and deſpiſed; or miſtaking the Degree of real Goodneſs, and, where it actually is in ſome Meaſure, coveting and being pleaſed with it, more than it deſerves. But both theſe Failures are effectually prevented, when God is the Object that determines our Affection. He (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs at all.* Goodneſs is his Nature and Eſſence, Goodneſs without Blemiſh, Defect, or Allay. To let looſe our Hearts upon any of the Things of this World is ſometimes ſinful, and is always dangerous; becauſe we fancy a great deal more to be in them, than in Truth there is. Reaſon might, and if that do not, ſad Experience will at laſt convince us; that they are not, cannot be, worthy our Affection. But when we fix upon God, nothing there is ſordid, nothing tranſient, hazardous, or deceitful. Here we may indulge our Paſſion, and give it free Scope: For, as all exceeds our utmoſt Range or Thought, ſo all deſerves our higheſt Admiration; and we can fall under no other Defect, but not admiring and not loving enough. In a Word, this Divine Fire refines the Soul, purges away the Droſs of Luſt and Senſe, raiſes it from Earth to Heaven, and confirms us to the Image of the God we love. A God who could not condeſcend to be reſembled by any other of the human Paſſions, but who (St. *John* aſſures us) *is love itſelf.*

1 John i. 4.

1 John iv. 7. 8. 16.

2. *Secondly,*

2. *Secondly*, This is deſervedly eſteemed the *Firſt* and *Great* Commandment, as it enjoins a Duty the moſt reaſonable of any other. For ſuch indeed is the Love of God, with regard to thoſe adorable Excellencies, which I did but lightly touch upon in the former Particular. And I could touch upon them but lightly; for no human Mind can conceive, no Art or Eloquence can expreſs them, worthily and fully. But here, I mean ſomething more; and do deſire, God may be look'd upon, not only as infinitely Good in himſelf, but as infinitely kind and good to us. For he is the general Benefactor of the whole World; the Author and Giver of all we have in Poſſeſſion, the Sum and ultimate End of all we can hope for. The Fulneſs of Joy dwells in his Preſence; and thoſe inexhauſtible Rivers of Pleaſure, which all of us pretend to thirſt and pant after, are no where to be found, but at his right Hand. We are therefore obliged to love him, not only in Point of Gratitude, for what is paſt; but no leſs in Point of Intereſt, for what we wiſh and expect in Time to come. The Heathens themſelves, who had very low and dark Notions of this Matter, in Compariſon of thoſe, which Revelation hath given to us; could yet go ſo high by the Light of mere Nature, as to agree, that God is the chief and laſt Good; and that the utmoſt Happineſs human Nature is capable of, muſt needs conſiſt in being like him, and in being with him. And in this Perſuaſion principally it is, that the Reaſonableneſs of the Commandment manifeſts itſelf. Becauſe the Motive of Love, the Apprehenſion of Good, tends always to an Object apprehended Good to us. A Thing ſuppoſed Good in itſelf only, would act upon our Souls but very feebly. It may excite our Admiration, and command our Praiſe; but Commendation and Wonder are too cold and ſpeculative, to deſerve the Name of Love. We feel, in daily Con-

verſation, a plain Difference between our Regards to Perſons, from whom we expect to have received Advantage and Delight; and thoſe paid to Perſons diſtant and unknown, whoſe Virtues only recommend them to us. We can allow the Latter more Reſpect, and acknowledge their Character ſuperior to that of our deareſt Relations or beſt Friends; without ſuffering ſuch Approbation to grow into Affection. For when all is done, Tenderneſs will not follow upon intrinſick Value only; but a Diſtinction muſt be made between Friendſhip and Reſpect; and Intereſt ſhall always caſt the Scale againſt a Multitude of good Qualities, if they be ſuch as ourſelves reap no ſenſible and immediate Benefit from.

But now in Almighty God both theſe Attractives conſpire to fix our Hearts; the moſt exquiſite Perfection, and the largeſt Bounty: The one to raiſe our Eſteem, the other to inflame our Affection. And in Truth it is great Pity, theſe Things are not better underſtood. For one main Reaſon why the Generality of People are ſo deficient in this Duty, ſeems to proceed upon a falſe Notion, which puts a Difference between the Love of God, and the Love of themſelves. Whereas theſe two can never be ſeparated in Nature; for we do then moſt effectually love ourſelves, when we love God moſt fervently. And, if this Perſuaſion were once well eſtabliſhed in our Minds; the Virtue I am treating of could ſcarce deſerve to be called a moral Duty, in which we are ſuppoſed to act with Freedom of Will; but would even advance into a natural Principle, where we are determined before-hand and have not the Power of refuſing. All, that Choice hath to do in this Matter, is to ſay, whether we will conſider or not: But, if that be once done fairly, the Reaſon of the Thing is too evident, and too cogent, to be withſtood. For no Man yet ever did, ever could hate himſelf; and conſequently

conſequently no Man ever hated that, which he eſteem'd his Good; or preferr'd any other Thing before that which he eſteem'd his chief Good. So that, ſuppoſing Men to be convinced, that God is their Good, they cannot love themſelves, and not love him: And, ſuppoſing them convinced that he is their ſupreme Good; they cannot but acquieſce in the Reaſonableneſs of this Command; and muſt love him, as every one to be ſure does love himſelf, *with all the Heart, and with all the Soul, and with all the Mind.* Ver. 37.

3. This Command excels all others, *Thirdly*, in Point of Uſefulneſs. For whereas the Reſt are generally determined to ſome ſingle Virtue; the Love of God enjoined here, is of vaſt Comprehenſion and univerſal Influence. It facilitates the Practice of Good Works of every Kind: And it recommends the Performance, or the Endeavours with regard to each of them.

1. It comprehends good Works of every Kind, by reaſon of that earneſt Deſire to pleaſe, which is an inſeparable Property of Love. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, is no leſs a Dictate of Nature, than of Religion. Such as ſhews this to be an active Virtue, not to be expreſſed by the Ecſtacies of our Minds, ſo much as by the Tenour of our Lives and Converſation. Not but that it diſpoſes us powerfully to both. For this will quicken our Zeal, and give us a ſenſible Delight in converſing with God: It will wing our Souls with Devotion, both in publick and private; and make us fly to his Arms with Joy unſpeakable, in Raptures of Prayer, and Praiſes, and pious Meditations. This will help us to diſcover the Beauties of his Glory and Majeſty, and kindle a noble Ambition of the utmoſt Likeneſs to him, ſo far as the Frailties of a mortal Nature can admit, by being *Holy as*, and becauſe, John xiv. 15.

1 Pet. i. 15, 16. *He is Holy.* This will allow no Advantage to come in Compariſon with his Favour, nor any Miſery with his Diſpleaſure. It will not decline the moſt mortifying Severities, when uſed as Expedients to ſecure his good Graces; but will diſdain the World and all its treacherous Allurements, which would defraud us of our only, our Eternal Bliſs, and make us look deform'd in the Eyes of him, whom our Soul loveth. So juſt Reaſon had St. *Paul* to ſay, that *the End of the Commandment is Charity.* For this, like a fruitful Tree, expands itſelf into all Graces; is like one common Trunk to ſo many Branches; and, where it once hath thoroughly taken Root, there will not fail to be a *pure Heart*, and *a good Conſcience, and Faith unfeigned.*

1 Tim. i. 5.

2. Again, as this Virtue comprehends the Reſt, ſo does it render the Practice of them all eaſy and pleaſant to us. It conquers the Reluctancies of corrupt Nature, invigorates the ſluggiſheſt Maſs, and, like the Soul in the Body, or the Spirits in the Blood, puts Life and Activity into all our Motions. It ſoftens our Difficulties; and reconciles us to thoſe Precepts, which would otherwiſe be inſupportable. Fear may prevail for ſome outward Acts of Obedience, but all without Love is Slavery and Conſtraint. For the Mind is not properly in them, till Neceſſity be turned into Choice. Then indeed every Engagement is bound faſt upon our Souls; it will *be our Meat* and Drink *to do the Will of our heavenly Father:* And we ſhall confeſs from the very Heart, what our Prayers daily put into our Mouths, that his *Service* is Freedom, *perfect Freedom.* 'Twas this, that filled the Apoſtles with Joy, *that they were counted worthy to ſuffer for the Name of Jeſus.* That this rendered the Labours of St. *Paul* ſo indefatigable, and his Reſolution ſo undaunted,

John iv. 34.

Acts v. 41.

that even *Life was no longer dear to him*, but *he was ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jeruſalem*, for his Maſter's ſake. And indeed Love ſeems to be the only Principle, that can ſecure our Stedfaſtneſs, and look Danger and Death in the Face. Nor could that *noble Army of Martyrs* even have *fought* their *good Fight*, and triumphed over Racks, and Croſſes, and Fires, for Religion; had not a Coal from Heaven firſt touched their Breaſts, and kindled them into this Divine Flame. Acts xxi. 13.

3. Once more. As Love quickens the heavy, and ſweetens the harſh and unpalatable Parts, ſo does it likewiſe recommend the Good we do, or attempt to do, above any other Conſideration whatſoever. It is a Principle, common to Laws Divine as well as Human, to meaſure the Deſerts of Men, not ſo much by the outward Act, as by the Intent and Diſpoſition of the Mind. Hence Offences againſt the Letter of the Law, if not committed with a Purpoſe to offend, have an equitable Relief allowed them. Hence alſo the moſt ſpecious Acts of Virtue, if done by Chance, or with indirect Purpoſes, are of ſmall Value in God's Sight. St. *Paul* ſuppoſes it a poſſible Caſe, for a Man to *give even his Body to be burn'd*, and to diſtribute *all his Goods to feed the Poor*, and yet at the ſame Time not *to have Charity*. And if it be thus with him, that Man and all his pompous Appearances of Piety are declared to be *nothing*. 'Tis this alone, can keep our Deſigns from being mercenary and mean. For though our Duty and our Intereſt are but one and the ſame Thing, conſidered under different Views; yet we are oftentimes to blame, in preferring the worſe Part of ourſelves, in Oppoſition to God, and in Prejudice to our better Part. He who made us, knows, by what Variety of Springs Mankind are ſet in Motion; and hath therefore made Fear alſo and temporal Evils and Advantages, Induce- 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

ments to our Duty. But none is ſo ſuitable to the Dignity of our Nature, and the Reaſonableneſs of Religion, as the Deſire and Love of God. Which accordingly we find ſtiled by the Prophet, God's *drawing us* to *himſelf with the Cords of a Man.*

Hoſ. xi. 4.

But, which is more, our Attempts to do well are recommended, and even our Tranſgreſſions are graciouſly paſs'd over, in virtue of this Love. And can there be a more comfortable Reflection, than that a Creature impotent and frail ſhould be accepted, not ſtrictly according to what he knows and does, but as he would know and would do: That gracious Allowances ſhould be made for a Multitude of Surpriſes and Infirmities, for unaffected Ignorance and an honeſt miſtaken Zeal! The plain Reaſon whereof is, that the Love of God preſerves us from perverſe and malicious Wickedneſs; it ſecures our Integrity, and ſuppoſes us to do our beſt. The Power and Opportunities of doing better are not always in our own Diſpoſal; and where we fall ſhort through want of theſe, our good Intentions will be placed to Account. But the Heart and Will to do well we are properly anſwerable for; and Love, which ſets this right, does therefore make Amends for many Imperfections; and preſents us at the Throne of Grace, though in ourſelves very feeble, very impure; yet, in the Sight of a merciful Judge, Righteous, and Clean, and Good.

4. The *Fourth* Pre-eminence of this Commandment conſiſts in impoſing a Virtue, which of all others moſt conduces to the Happineſs of Mankind. For ſo does the Love of God in many Reſpects. It gives us undoubted Aſſurances of his Favour in return, whoſe *loving Kindneſs is better than Life itſelf.* It procures us a Truce from the Evils of the World, and takes out the Sting of all we feel or fear, by repoſing the Soul upon a Gracious and Wiſe Providence.

Pſal. lxiii. 4.

Providence. A Providence, which, we are ſure, does *not only care for us*, but order all Events ſo, that they ſhall *work together for our Good.* Rom. viii. 28.
It frees us from Terror and Diſquiet, brings us under the Violence of our Appetites, and ſuffers none of thoſe rival Paſſions to get Head, to the reſtleſs Importunity whereof the greateſt Uneaſineſſes of Life are truly owing. It weans our Affections from the preſent World, by carrying up the Thoughts to nobler and more durable Objects. And, when thoſe Objects are attained, this ſingle Virtue hath the Privilege of bearing us Company in a Future State. For it is the Apoſtle's Obſervation, that although *Faith, Hope, and Charity, abide now*, that is, are all three accommodated to our preſent Condition; yet *the greateſt of theſe is Charity.* And therefore *the Greateſt*, becauſe it is the Work of Heaven and Immortality; the conſtant Entertainment and Bliſs of *Angels and Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.* For they *ſee God as he is*; and the more they ſee of him, the more they muſt needs love him. And in regard no finite Being can ever comprehend his infinite Perfections, and ſee him fully; therefore the Matter which excites this Love, muſt needs be inexhauſtible, and the Exerciſe of it muſt needs be everlaſting. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. 1 John iii. 2.

Theſe Arguments, I conceive, will abundantly juſtify the Character given here of the Love of God, and prove that to be the *Firſt* and *Great Commandment.* It remains now to ſhew, how the Love of our Neighbour is, in theſe ſeveral Reſpects, the *Second*, and *like unto it.* Which I ſhall content myſelf with doing in very few Words, and ſo conclude.

1. This Commandment is *like unto* the Former, as engaging us to the ſame natural, the ſame generous Act of Love: And, as it determines that Love to an Object, the moſt worthy of any that we can hold ſen-

ſible Converſation with in this State of Mortality. But then it is alſo *ſecond* or inferior to the Former, in both theſe Regards; becauſe it limits the Love of, our Neighbour to ſuch Kinds and Degrees only, as are conſiſtent with our Duty to, and Love of, God. It preſerves a juſt Difference between the Image and the Original: Between an Affection and Eſteem, proportioned to a Creature: Equal by Nature with ourſelves; and that abſolute Reverence and unbounded Deſire, with which our Hearts ought to be enlarged toward the great Creator; a Being of incomprehenſible Perfection, and infinitely ſuperior, both to our Neighbour and ourſelves.

2. Again. This *Second* reſembles the *Firſt and Great Commandment* in its Reaſonableneſs. For we are to look upon Mankind, not only as the faireſt Copy of the Divinity here below; but alſo as Good and Beneficial to one another. For this, among other wiſe Reaſons, Providence hath left every Man in an indigent and depending State; ordained that no Man, of how exalted a Condition ſoever, ſhould have Eaſe and Happineſs; or even the moſt neceſſary Supplies of Life, perfectly in his own Power. Thus our Neceſſities become unavoidable Engagements to a perpetual Commerce and friendly Intercourſe; and our mutual Succours as ſo many mutual Endearments. For Nature will always value that which is uſeful to it: And Intereſt, no leſs than Gratitude, inſpires a Tenderneſs for them, without whoſe Aſſiſtance we cannot be ſupported. The Reaſon then of this Duty is very obvious, by coming Home to our own Profit at laſt; for indeed thus to love and do good to our Neighbour, is in effect to love and ſerve ourſelves.

But ſtill this can be but the *Second* Commandment. For, though we are obliged to *love our Neighbour as ourſelves*; becauſe he is compounded of the ſame Matter and Form: A Branch of the ſame Root, a Stream

Stream of the ſame Source; the ſame Human Nature, the ſame Image of the Divine Mind, exemplified and imparted to us all in common: Yet the Fountain muſt needs continue more honourable, from whence theſe ſeveral Currents iſſue forth. And though the Benefits Men receive from each other, are ſo much more ſenſible, immediate, and affecting, that St. *John* declares him *a Liar, who hates his Brother whom he hath ſeen, and boaſts of loving God, whom he hath not ſeen*; yet we are always to remember, that Men *could have no Power* to our Advantage, *except it were given them from above.* Their very Inclination to do us good is from an Impulſe of Divine Grace; their Ability and Opportunities of doing it are from the Bounty of Divine Providence; the Wiſdom, the Authority, the Riches, the Friendſhips they do it with, are ſo many Talents, committed to their Management for this very Purpoſe. So that our firſt and greateſt Thanks and Love muſt needs be owing to the Author and original Proprietor of theſe Advantages: And after Him, to thoſe whom he appoints his Stewards. For ſuch indeed are the beſt and higheſt of the Sons of Men, the Diſpenſers of God's Liberality, and, in their ſeveral Stations, Inſtruments for handing it down to us. 1 John iv. 20.

3. So likewiſe, *Thirdly*, for its Uſefulneſs: This is a moſt comprehenſive Duty. *All the Law*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is fulfilled in one Word, even in this, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf*, and ſo it manifeſtly is. For this gives us that compendious Rule of making every other Man's Caſe our own. It cuts off all thoſe wicked Partialities, and that ſelfiſh Narrowneſs of Spirit, from whence all Injuſtice and Uncharitableneſs proceed. This takes off all, that worldly Minds think burdenſome; diſplays the Charms of Liberality and Good-nature; diſpoſes us to diſtribute with Simplicity, to *ſhew Mercy with Chearfulneſs*; and proves experimentally Gal. v. 14. Rom. xii. 8.

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the Truth of our Lord's Maxim, *it is more bleſſed to give than to receive.* In
Acts xx. 35. ſhort, it engages every Man's Affection and Aſſiſtance for every other Man; and, where Actions can avail nothing, it ſecures the Benefit of Prayers and good Wiſhes: It commands all poſſible and proper Teſtimonies of an hearty Readineſs to ſerve one another; and enſures Acceptance for the Meaneſt of thoſe Services, by rendering the Will of equal Merit with the Deed.

Laſtly, This *Second* Commandment is of great Affinity, but ſtill in Subordination, to the *Firſt*, as it conduces to the general Happineſs of Mankind. For this it does moſt evidently, moſt effectually, by ſubduing our Pride, our Avarice, our Ambition, our Envyings and Emulations, our every unruly Luſt and Appetite; from whence Diviſions in the Church, Factions in the State, Animoſities and Parties, Wars and Fightings, Miſeries and Confuſions grow. It is the ſtrongeſt Cement of Society, the beſt Preſerver of Juſtice and Equity, of Obedience and Order, of Peace and Unity. Without it the moſt prudent Laws ſignify but little; and with it they are in a Manner needleſs. For Laws are in the Nature of Bridles, to curb and rein them in, who, for want of this Love, are continually biting and devouring one another. This would ſet us at one with our bittereſt Enemies; or rather indeed, it would leave no ſuch Thing as an Enemy in the World. And (to juſtify its Reſemblance yet more to the *Firſt and Great Commandment*) this alſo continues, and is perfected, among the Bleſſed hereafter. For though the Eſſence of their Bliſs conſiſt in a perpetual Contemplation of the Glory and Goodneſs of God; yet large Additions will be ever flowing into it, by the Joy, which redounds from the Happineſs of our Brethren, who ſhall be made Partakers of the ſame precious Promiſes with ourſelves.

O that moſt glorious and happy Day, when Faith ſhall give place to Sight, and Hope be ſwallowed up in preſent and complete Enjoyment! When all Imperfections ſhall ceaſe, all Differences be compoſed; and nothing remain, but ſtrict Unanimity, and boundleſs Love, and exquiſite Delight! When a new Scene ſhall open, of an Eternity to be employed in Concerts of Praiſe and Thanks, for the excellent Glory of God, and his ineſtimable Goodneſs to us, and to all Mankind! But, till that bleſt Day come, if there be any Senſe of Intereſt, or of Duty; if any Regard to the Happineſs of the Publick, to the Honour of Religion, to the Salvation of our own Souls; in a Word, if any Care to approve ourſelves Chriſtians in good earneſt; let it be ſeen, by abounding in that Love to God and to our Neighbour, which is the *very Bond of Peace, and of all Virtues.* Let it be ſeen, by addreſſing ourſelves moſt devoutly to the Throne of Grace, with thoſe Petitions, which the beſt of Churches puts into our Mouths: Beſeeching *Almighty God to cleanſe the Thoughts of our Hearts by the Inſpiration of his Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love him*; And to *pour down* into them *that moſt excellent Gift of Charity, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before him.* And may he grant this for his only Son Jeſus Chriſt his Sake. *Amen.*

1ſt Collect Communion Serv.

Collect, Quinquageſ. Sunday.

The Nineteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O GOD, foraſmuch as without thee, we are not able to pleaſe thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all Things direct and rule our Hearts, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Rom. viii. 8. *Eph.* iv. 18--24.

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE. Eph. iv. 17.

17. This intimate Union with Chriſt (*Ver.* 16.) I affirm to be an indiſpenſable Obligation upon you, for living under ſuch Advantages and Helps, after quite another Manner, than unconverted Gentiles do ignorantly ſuppoſe themſelves at Liberty to do.

17. *THis I ſay therefore, and teſtify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the Vanity of their Mind.*

18, 19. For they, by the Blindneſs of their Judgment, and that Averſion they have to a Life of Reaſon and Purity, which ſhould recommend and reſemble them to God; have loſt all Senſe of the Abſurdity and Vileneſs of the groſſeſt Sins: and ſo have not only proſtituted themſelves to the Practice, but by Cuſtom hardened themſelves into a Liking of, and Delight in, and Eagerneſs after, the moſt filthy Carnalities.

18. *Having the Underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the Blindneſs of their Heart:*

19. *Who being paſt feeling, have given themſelves over unto Laſciviouſneſs, to work all Uncleanneſs with Greedineſs.*

20. *But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt;*

21. *If ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the Truth is in Jeſus:*

22, 23, 24. See Epiſtle for, 6, 12, 18 Sundays.

22. *That ye put off, concerning the former Converſation, the old Man which is corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts:*

23. *And be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind;*

24. *And that ye put on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs.*

25. One Vice (or Member as it were) of the Old Man to be put off, is Lying, a Practice exceedingly pernicious to Human Society.

25. *Wherefore putting away lying, ſpeak every Man Truth with his Neighbour; for we are Members one of another.*

26, 27. Another is ſinful Anger; which will always be ſo, if retained long: and will give great Advantage over you to the Devil and his Temptations.

26. *Be ye angry and ſin not: let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath.*

27. *Neither give Place to the Devil.*

28. *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the Thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

28. Another is Theft, and all Manner of fraudulent Dealing, which the Chriſtian Religion is ſo far from allowing Men in; that it requires bodily Labour from them who cannot ſubſiſt honeſtly without it, and expects even from them, who get their Living this Way, ſome Proportion of Alms for the Suſtenance of the Poor. See Epiſt. on 2 S. after *Epiph.*

29. *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the Uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter Grace unto the Hearers.*

29. See Epiſtle on 3 Sunday in *Lent.*

30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed unto the Day of Redemption.*

30. Do not, by a Converſation ſo oppoſite to his Nature, diſpleaſe the Holy Spirit of God, and provoke him to withdraw thoſe ſanctifying Graces from you, which are given, as an Earneſt of your Salvation at the Laſt Day, and a Teſtimony of God's admitting you into all the Privileges of the Goſpel Covenant, and owning you as a Peculiar. See Epiſtle, 8, 12 Sunday.

31. *Let all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking be put away from you, with all Malice.*

31. See Goſpel for 6 Sunday.

32. *And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's Sake hath forgiven you.*

32. See Goſpel for 22 Sunday.

COMMENT.

THE abſolute Neceſſity, as well as the invaluable Benefits, of that Divine Revelation and Grace, which is miniſtered by the Goſpel of Chriſt, need no other Evidence, than the Deſcription given here by St. *Paul*, of thoſe miſerable Circumſtances, to which the Heathens were reduced for want of them. The wretched Ignorance and Errors, whereby the Candle of the Lord within them, the Faculties of Reaſon and Judgment, were almoſt quite put out; The total Depravation of the Will and Affections, addicted and faſtened down to Objects of Fleſh and Senſe; and irreconcileably averſe to all the Ends and Methods, wherein the Dignity of Human Nature, Ver. 17—19.

Nature, and the Excellence of a Spiritual and Divine Life, do conſiſt: The utter Inſenſibility and Obduration of the Heart and Conſcience, which cuſtomary ſinning introduces; partly by Men's own obſtinate Indulgence of their wicked Luſts, and reſiſting the Checks and Admonitions of their own and God's Spirit; and partly, by that judicial Hardneſs, which God is provoked to inflict, by withdrawing thoſe preventing and aſſiſting Graces, which they have continued to abuſe and deſpiſe: And, *Laſtly*, The Inability of corrupt Nature to diſcern and apply itſelf to Matters of Religion: Plainly demonſtrated, by the Examples of eminent Heathen Philoſophers, who, though exceeding ſhrewd and ſagacious in other reſpects, were yet in this miſtaken, and abſurd, even to the moſt deſpicable Degree of Childiſhneſs and Folly. Theſe are Experiments, too plain to be gainſayed, and ſuch as conſpire, at once to give us a very mean Opinion of our own Natural Powers, and to oblige us to Thankfulneſs for thoſe ſupernatural Aſſiſtances, to which we owe the very Capacity, either of *pleaſing God*, or of thinking and acting like Men.

Epiſt. for Epiph.

Concerning the Change, ſaid afterwards to be wrought upon Perſons converted to Chriſtianity, it may be ſeaſonable to obſerve, that the Manner of the Apoſtle's expreſſing it, intimates their becoming quite another Sort of People; indeed the very reverſe of what they had been before. *The old Man to be put off*, is ſaid to be *corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts.* Thoſe Luſts, which cheated Men with flattering Promiſes of Satisfactions which they cannot yield; and therefore the Change in this Point will conſiſt, in ſtopping our Ears againſt all falſe Inſinuations from that Quarter, abandoning the unprofitable Corruption, and having our *Fruit unto Holineſs.* This implies mortifying and renouncing all ſinful Deſires; repenting and effectually forſaking all

Ver. 22—24.

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our paſt Faults: But *putting on the new Man*, implies a great deal more. This ſuppoſes Activity and Diligence in Piety and Virtue; doing Good no leſs than abſtaining from Evil. This proves, how ſandy a Foundation thoſe Hopes are built upon, which look for Salvation and Acceptance with God, for not being vicious only: And, provided the Sins of Commiſſion be carefully avoided, are as little concerned for thoſe Omiſſions, as if they were to make no Article in our Account. The Danger of which too common Deceit, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe our Bleſſed Lord had in View, and intended effectually to warn us all againſt, by ſo directly levelling at them his Deſcriptions of the general Judgment, under thoſe two famous Parables of the *Talents*, and of the *Sheep and the Goats*.

See Epiſt. for 5 S. after Trin.

Matt. xxv.

Again. As the great Depravity of an Unregenerate State conſiſts in an *Alienation from the Life of God*: ſo does the Commendation of a regenerate one, in being *created after God in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*. And this Conſideration duly borne in Mind would, I cannot but think, abundantly ſuffice, to ſatisfy thoſe Doubts and Scruples Men diſpute ſo variouſly about, concerning ſome Liberties, the Lawfulneſs whereof is queſtionable; or concerning the Meaſure and Circumſtances of others, the Lawfulneſs whereof in themſelves is unqueſtionable. For, in ſuch Caſes, would we but aſk our Conſciences, whether a total abſtaining from the former, and a prudent and ſomewhat ſeverer Reſtraint with regard to the latter, or whether a larger or more unguarded Allowance, have more of the Spirit of Religion, more of a new Heart and Affections, more of Conformity to the Holineſs of God; after whoſe Image it is our Glory to be created, and whoſe Likeneſs it is our Duty to preſerve, and expreſs, and aſpire after higher Degrees of: the Reſolution of this

Ver. 24.

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ſingle Queſtion would clearly inform us, though not what is ſtrictly lawful or unlawful, yet (which is more uſeful) what is fit or unfit, agreeable or diſagreeable to our Character; better than all the Subtilities of Caſuiſts, or entering into the Niceties of any ſuch particular Points whatſoever.

Ver. 25. From the mention of this great Change from the *Old* to the *New Man*, St. *Paul* deſcends to ſome Particulars, permitted by the Heathens, but by no Means allowable to Chriſtians. The *Firſt* whereof is *Lying*. Which, in ſome Caſes, the Philoſophers made no Scruple to excuſe, nay even to approve. But the Apoſtle here urges the Duty of ſpeaking Truth; as a Duty reſulting from our Union into one myſtical Body. In which there ought to be no Manner of Fraud practiſed; as Experience proves, that never any is, between the Members of the natural Body. The Deſign of Speech is to communicate our Thoughts, and ſo to profit one another, not to diſguiſe them, and ſo by deceiving to hurt one another. Againſt this Deſign all manner of Falſhood ſeems to make. And where that is attended with Malice and miſchievous Intent, I ſhould rather chooſe to call this a complicated Crime, than to ſay, that Untruth without it is no Crime at all. It will not follow from hence, that a Man ſhall be obliged to ſpeak all Truths, that may do Hurt; but neither will it follow, becauſe ſome Truths may be innocently and profitably concealed, that therefore we are at Liberty to ſpeak Things that are untrue. For whatever particular Conveniences may perſuade in ſome extraordinary Caſes; ſurely an obſtinate Silence is more becoming a Chriſtian's Sincerity and Charity, than ſuch Impoſtures, as tend to that general Inconvenience of deſtroying the Security and mutual Confidence, which ought always to be among Men, whoſe common Intereſt always is the ſame. The Examples produced out of Scripture, in vindication of all thoſe, which are uſually ſtiled *offi-*

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cious Lies, cannot be of any conſiderable Weight; becauſe they are only related as Hiſtorical Facts, but no where recommended as a Pattern for our Imitation. And thoſe Lies which are termed Ironical, and make a matter of Jeſt or Sport, ſeem to be Diverſions much beneath the Character of a grave good Man. They may adminiſter a little Mirth to the Perſon uſing them; but it is ſufficient Condemnation to this Sort of Entertainment, that thoſe Parties generally think themſelves deſpiſed and ill uſed, who diſcover, that they have been impoſed upon by them.

The next of theſe Particulars is *Anger*.

Ver. 26.

That this, conſidered in itſelf, and upon all Occaſions whatſoever, is unlawful; neither the moſt rigid Philoſophers, nor the ſevereſt Chriſtians, have, I think, ever been able to prove. It is one of the Paſſions implanted in us by Nature. The firſt Motions of it ſeem to be mechanical and neceſſary; the Haſtineſs or Slowneſs to it depends in great Meaſure upon the Temper of the Body, and the Animal Spirits. Thus far it is not ſubject to the Power of our own Will, or to the Corrections of Reaſon and Religion. This alſo is a Paſſion (like all the reſt of thoſe ſtiled *Simple* and *Natural* ones) capable of ſerving excellent Purpoſes, when managed with Sobriety and Diſcretion. For there is a Tameneſs of Spirit, which deſerves Cenſure and Reproof; and, in ſome Caſes, we even do well to be angry. For, admitting Anger, according to the received Notion of it, to proceed upon a Deſire of obtaining Satisfaction for ſome Injury done, or conceived to be done, to us, or to thoſe we love; the Honour of God, the Reverence due to the Laws, the Love of Virtue, the Protection of good Men, may make this not only innocent, but neceſſary and commendable. For inſtance, when the Name of God, his Word and Truth, Things which ought to be moſt ſacred, are boldly violated and impiouſly trampled upon;

upon; no good Chriſtian can, none in a public Character may, ſee this done without Indignation; or is obliged to ſuffer the Offenders to paſs off unrebuked for their Wickedneſs and Folly. Thus *Moſes* was exceedingly provoked, and his *Anger waxed hot*, at the Molten Calf which the *Iſraelites* had made to diſhonour God and themſelves in the Wilderneſs. And our Bleſſed Saviour, the perfect Pattern of Meekneſs and Patience, is ſaid not only to have been grieved, but to *look upon the Phariſees with Anger, becauſe of the Hardneſs of their Hearts*. And as theſe Occaſions, where the Glory of God and the Good of others are concerned, juſtify ſome Reſentments of this Kind; ſo St. *Paul*, in the Scripture now before us, ſeems to imply, that they may be warrantable alſo with regard to private Injuries and Affronts; provided always, that due Care be taken to reſtrain their Exceſſes, and to conquer and compoſe them in Time. It is therefore very obſervable how this Caution runs, *Be ye angry, and ſin not; let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath: neither give Place to the Devil.*

Exod. xxii. 19.

Mark iii. 5.

Ver. 26, 27.

The manner of this Exhortation does, in the mean while, plainly argue, that, however upon ſome Occaſions, and in ſome Degrees, Anger may be lawful; yet the juſteſt Anger cannot be excuſed, when it continues long. For though, as we obſerved juſt now, the firſt Motions of our Paſſion may not be under our Check and Juriſdiction; though we deſire and grieve, and reſent, as naturally and unavoidably as we hunger or thirſt; yet when that firſt Guſt is over, the governing Part of the Soul may and ought to interpoſe its Powers; and, by a timely and prudent Care, quell the rebellious Diſturber of our Peace. Lay the Storm we may and muſt, though we could not prevent the Blowing of the Wind, nor the Swelling of the Waves, when it did blow. No Heathen Maſters of Morality

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do ever mention the Peeviſh without Blame. But for the Sullen and Moroſe, who feed upon the bitter Morſel, and turn it into Gall; no Terms of Reproach were ever thought too hard for them. Much leſs will Chriſtianity endure the harbouring and cheriſhing of any evil Thoughts. If theſe intrude, we muſt immediately caſt them out, compoſe our Spirits, and return to a peaceful and kind Diſpoſition. Silent Grudges, and ſecret Contrivances of Revenge, and Quarrels perpetuated, or induſtriouſly prolonged, can never be conſiſtent with the Obedience of that Maſter, who hath ſo ſolemnly enjoined all His Servants to *forgive* and to *love* their Enemies. No Man can nouriſh a laſting Anger, without living in open Defiance to the Duty of Charity. And, ſince no other Perſon's Breach of his Duty can bear me out in the Breach of mine; and an Exceſs may be committed (the worſt Exceſs indeed) in the Duration, as well as in the Degree, of a Paſſion; 'tis certain, that every one who continues in a State of Enmity and Wrath, commits a Fault, which the higheſt Provocations can never juſtify; and expoſes his Salvation to infinite Hazard and Danger.

Matt. v. 44.

For we ought by all Means to take Notice of thoſe very ſignificant Words, added as an Enforcement of the Apoſtle's Exhortation; *Neither give Place to the Devil.* Not *letting the Sun go down upon their Wrath*, was a Precept even of Heathen Philoſophers: Obſerved moſt ſtrictly by the Scholars of *Pythagoras* in particular, who, after any Quarrel, conſtantly ſhook Hands, and profeſſed hearty Reconciliation at the ſetting of the Sun. This therefore was an Uſage very proper to remind thoſe of, who had been converted from Paganiſm; becauſe referring to a Duty, which the wiſeſt and beſt among themſelves, even when not yet Chriſtians, thought of indiſpenſable Obligation. But

Ver. 27.

Plutarch.

now the Apoſtle adds a weightier Enforcement; that of the ill Conſequences, certain to attend the Neglect of it. For the Devil, as a Tempter, works upon us by our Paſſions: The Exceſſes of theſe, in what Kind ſoever, are the only Handle he can lay hold on us by: And He, who is continually upon the Watch for our Deſtruction, will be ſure to ſlip no Advantage we give him. But a greater can in no Caſe be given him, than by the Continuance of our Anger. For, as this is a moſt outrageous Paſſion, deaf to all good Advice, and diſturbing the Operations of Reaſon; to keep this up is to get the Man entirely into his own Power. 'Tis to make him the moſt like himſelf, who is a Murderer, and a malicious Lier in wait from the Beginning: It is utterly to deface all the Lines of God's Image; to exclude all Benefit from the Sufferings of Chriſt; to deſtroy all the Principles of Religion, and their Influence upon his Mind; to ripen him for any Manner of Wickedneſs in this, and to fill up the Meaſure of his Damnation in the other World. So juſt is that Maxim of the *Jews*, that all Hell dwells and reigns in the Angry and Malicious Man; very near this here, of *giving Place* to, or making Room for, *the Devil:* Yielding, as it were, our Souls up, and putting him into Poſſeſſion; than which, no Chriſtian need be told, a greater Sin and Miſery, and a ſurer Pledge of eternal Condemnation, the State we now live in is not capable of.

See Ep. for 2 S. after Trin.

The remaining Parts of this Day's Epiſtle have been formerly under Conſideration, in the Places referred to by the Paraphraſe.

The Nineteenth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. ix. 1.

1. *JESUS entered into a Ship, and passed over, and came into his own City.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. *Jesus* leaving the Country of the *Gergasenes*, at the Desire of the Inhabitants (after the Loss of the Swine, into whom he had permitted the Devils to enter) coasted over the Lake of *Genesareth*, and came to *Capernaum*, Mark ii. 1, 2.

2. *And behold they brought to him a Man sick of the Palsey, lying on a Bed; and Jesus seeing their Faith, said unto the Sick of the Palsey, Son, be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee.*

2. Upon the News of his Arrival, vast Crowds of People came together, among others some, who brought a miserable Paralytick to be cured; but, the Multitude of People not suffering them to come in by the Door, they let him in through the Roof of the House, *Mark* ii. 3, 4. *Luke* v. 18, 19.

3. *And behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This Man blasphemeth.*

3. The Scribes charged him with Blasphemy, for arrogating to himself a Power of forgiving Sins, which the Scripture declares to belong to God only, *Mark* ii. 7. *Luke* v. 21. vii. 49.

4. *And Jesus knowing their Thoughts, said, Wherefore think you Evil in your Hearts?*

5. *For whether is it easier to say, Thy Sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk?*

6. *But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins, (then saith he to the Sick of the Palsy) Arise, take up thy Bed, and go unto thine House.*

7. *And he arose and departed to his House.*

8. *But when the Multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such Power unto Men.*

8. This was such an Instance of Divine Power, as they confessed, did exceed all that ever they had seen before, *Luke* v. 26. *Mark* ii. 12. and therefore they gave God Thanks for exerting it among them, in so astonishing and beneficial a Manner.

COMMENT.

I Have, in the Paraphraſe, obſerved the manner of bringing this ſick Perſon to our Saviour, as we find it more largely deſcribed, in the Accounts of it, left us by St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*. They tell us, that the Confluence of People about our Bleſſed Lord was ſo great, as not only to fill the Houſe in which he then remained; but to leave no Room, no Poſſibility for approaching ſo much as the Door. This Difficulty put the Friends of the Diſeaſed upon a new and very unuſual Method, of untiling the Houſe, and letting down the ſick Man in his Couch through the Roof. Nothing could better expreſs the Vigour of their *Faith*; that is, their eager Deſire of obtaining, and their confident Expectation of receiving a Cure, from the Power and Goodneſs of Chriſt, of which they had entertained ſo full a Perſuaſion. And therefore He, who never wanted Inclination to pity and relieve the Diſtreſſed; and only waited, til l Men were duly qualified to receive the Mercies, which he was always ready to beſtow; *ſeeing their Faith*; that is, finding them capable, and judging this a fit Opportunity for exerciſing his Divine Compaſſion, granted their Requeſt, and healed the Diſtemper preſently.

Some Perſons have from hence taken Occaſion to enter into very nice, and, I think, very needleſs Diſputes, how far a Man may be profited by the Faith and the Interceſſions of others in his Behalf. Suppoſing, (it ſeems) becauſe the Story makes no mention of any Faith, except that of the Friends and Bearers of this impotent Man; that the Patient himſelf had no Part in that virtuous Diſpoſition, to which *Jeſus* allowed ſo tender and gracious a Regard. But St. *Chryſoſtom* may well be thought to have made a better Judgment of the Caſe. Who ſuppoſes *Their Faith*, not an excluſive Term; but ſo to mean that of his Friends, as withal to imply that of the ſick Perſon alſo.

He

He thinks the ſuffering himſelf to be preſented to Chriſt, in a Method ſo troubleſome to his weak Condition, an Argument of much Zeal and great Aſſurance in him. And though we read nothing of any Petition made in his own Perſon, yet will not this Circumſtance amount to a ſufficient Objection againſt him. The Violence of his Diſtemper may reaſonably be preſumed to have diſabled his Speech; or, if it had not, yet the very Spectacle of a Body ſo debilitated, the Manner of the Action, the Fatigue undergone in it, all ſpoke for him; and carried a more moving Eloquence, than it was poſſible for any Tongue to utter. But above all, the Remiſſion of his Sin evidently proves the Temper of his own Mind. For however other People may prevail for temporal Bleſſings upon the Friends they aſk for; yet Religion hath given us no Ground to believe, that any Man's actual Offences can ever be abſolved, without the Offender's own actual Remorſe and hearty Deſires of Forgiveneſs.

Some again have gone into an Opinion, very diſtant from the former. They exalt this Man's Virtue to ſo high a Degree of Reſignation, as to determine his Faith, and that of his Friends, to quite different Objects. His Friends, they tell us, according to the Weakneſs of Minds more carnal, were concerned only for the Recovery of his bodily Health; but he, whoſe Diſpoſition was more ſpiritual and abſtracted, was ſollicitous for nothing, but the Healing of his Soul. And, this being a Mercy of infinitely higher Conſequence, our Lord firſt gratified his Deſires, and afterwards granted the Requeſt of his Friends. By this Example deſigning to inſtruct us, what is the Order proper to be obſerved, in aſking and in eſteeming the Bleſſings of God: That the Spiritual ſhould always have the Preference above the Temporal; and that the Diſeaſes and Infirmities of our Inward Man are abundantly more to be lamented and pro-

vided againſt, than any Pains or Neceſſities of the Outward.

Theſe Inferences are, without all Queſtion, juſt and true: But the Ground here aſſigned for them, ſeems to be altogether precarious and conjectural. And therefore I ſhall rather fix upon ſomething for a Foundation of them, which the Relation made by the Evangeliſts, ſeems to have ſet in a very clear Light. It is the Method of our Lord's Proceeding. He, though the viſible and immediate Deſign, and, in all likelihood, the ſole End in view, of applying to him at this Time, was the Recovery of the Palſy; yet overlooking, as it were, the Diſeaſe, accoſts the Man in Terms very foreign, in Appearance, to the Intent and Expectations of thoſe that were preſent. For firſt of all he ſays, *Son, be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee*; and defers that, which might be imagined more important and to the Purpoſe, by not ſaying, till ſome Time after, *Ariſe, and take up thy Bed, and walk.*

Now the Reaſons for this Manner of proceeding I take to be principally Two. The one expreſsly declared, the other manifeſtly implied.

1. That, which the Evangeliſts take direct Notice of, is our Lord's hereby gaining an Opportunity to make his Divine Authority known. For He, who *perceived the Thoughts of the Scribes*, and what they ſaid *within themſelves*, after he had ſpoken; could not be ignorant of the *Evil in their Hearts*, and the Interpretation they would paſs upon what he was about to ſpeak. Since then their Perverſeneſs was ſuch, that they would not fail to cenſure him for Blaſphemy; as his Goodneſs would not ſuffer this languiſhing Creature to want the Conſolation of Forgiveneſs, for any Offence which the Enemies of his Doctrine might take at it; ſo his Wiſdom converted their Malice into an Occaſion of more plentiful Conviction by ſo ordering Two Inſtances of his Divine

Power

Power that they ſhould mutually illuſtrate and eſtabliſh each other.

The captious Phariſees, upon his releaſing the ſick Man from inward Guilt, immediately charged our Lord with Blaſphemy; *i. e.* An impious Diſhonour done to God, by ſacrilegiouſly uſurping a Right, peculiar to God alone. The Principle, which this Accuſation went upon, our Lord plainly allows: But then he clears himſelf of it by this Conſequence; that, as no Power but God's could forgive Sins; ſo none but God's could work this Miracle of Healing. If therefore he ſhould give them a ſenſible Demonſtration of his Divinity, in one of the Inſtances; they ought to be ſatisfied, that he had done no more than became him in the other. Conſequently, that he, who healed this Perſon's Body (not by a miniſterial and delegated Power, not by invoking the Aſſiſtance of God, as the Prophets uſed to do; but by an inherent Authority of his own, which could command all created Nature) was that very Lord of Soul and Body both; who, they acknowledged, had alone Right to acquit the Conſciences of Men. This is the evident Deſign and Meaning of our Bleſſed Saviour's Reply at the *fifth* and *ſixth Verſes*, *Whether is eaſier to ſay* (that is, to ſay with Efficacy and Succeſs) *Thy Sins be forgiven thee*; *or to ſay*, *Ariſe and walk? But*, *that ye may know*, *that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins*, *(then ſaith he to the Sick of the Palſey) Ariſe*, *take up thy Bed*, *and go unto thine Houſe*.

Iren. adv. Hæreſ. l. v. c. 17.

Now in this Management we may diſcern a wonderful Prudence, for the putting that Truth out of all diſpute, which our Bleſſed Saviour intended to eſtabliſh. The Remiſſion of Sins is a Spiritual and Inviſible Bleſſing. In this his Enemies might ſuſpect, that he arrogated to himſelf more than he was able to make good, and boaſted with great Security, in a Caſe

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Caſe where no Body could diſprove him. But the Cure of the Diſeaſe their own Eyes would judge of; and this had its Difficulties no leſs than the other; that is, both were impoſſible, except with God only. The Efficacy of his Word therefore, demonſtrated in one of theſe beyond all Contradiction or Doubt, ought in Reaſon to produce the Belief of a Power, no leſs than Almighty, in the other; though the ſame ocular Demonſtration were not given of it. The Reaſon is, becauſe the Want of like Demonſtration in both Caſes was not from any Defect in the Perſon operating as if his Power did not extend to both alike; but to the different Nature of the Caſes themſelves, which could not both admit of it alike. For one was the Object of Senſe and proved itſelf; but there was an unavoidable Neceſſity, that the other ſhould be the Collection of Reaſon. And therefore it was proper to make Evidence of this, by the Former, which carried its own Evidence along with it.

2. The other Reaſon, which I ſaid our Lord's Manner of proceeding implied, is, that this Man's Infirmity was inflicted upon him, as a Puniſhment for his Sins. That gracious Salutation, *Son, be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee*, had otherwiſe been utterly impertinent to the Matter in Hand. But thus underſtood, it hath a direct Tendency to Comfort; and gave good Hopes, that when the Guilt was releaſed, the Penalty, drawn down by it, ſhould not long continue. Thus our Lord approved himſelf a ſkilful and wiſe Phyſician, by going to the Root of the Diſeaſe, and making it his firſt Care to carry off the Cauſe; which once removed, the Malady itſelf receives a certain and an eaſy Cure. And this is a Point of great moment, to be rightly underſtood, and very ſeriouſly conſidered. For to any Chriſtian, who ſhall obſerve, how our Lord was pleaſed to expreſs himſelf upon other Occaſions

Mat. v. 34.
Luke xviii. 42.

Occaſions of the like Nature; what Directions for the Behaviour of Perſons upon the Bed of Sickneſs are left by his Apoſtle; how expreſs the Scriptures are, that, not bodily Death only, but all the Decays of Nature, all the Pains and Sufferings which afflict us while in this Body, were originally introduced by Sin; how the Divine Wiſdom hath ordered, that Health, and Strength, and long Life ſhould be natural Conſequences, no leſs than providential Encouragements and Rewards, of Virtue; and Diſeaſes and Sorrows, and a more ſpeedy Diſſolution, the ordinary Effect of a vicious Courſe; what Threatenings and Inflictions, *laſtly*, of this kind we read in Holy Writ, as Inſtances of a more immediate and vindictive Juſtice: To any, I ſay, who ſhall impartially weigh theſe Arguments, it will appear ſufficiently plain, at what Door our Languiſhings and bodily Indiſpoſitions are of right to be laid. So that the Caſe before us is by no Means particular to the Perſon concern'd in it; but is in this reſpect the Caſe of all Mankind. And however ſome, who carry their Thoughts but a little Way, may content themſelves with aſcribing ſuch Alterations to common Accidents, and natural Cauſes; yet our excellent Church (according to the uſual Wiſdom conſpicuous in all her Offices) hath the trueſt Reaſon, in appointing her Miniſters to go to the Bottom of this Matter. For it is certainly of the laſt Importance, that we ſhould put every ſick Perſon in Mind, as I now do my Readers in her own Words, That *Almighty God is the Lord of Life and Death, and of all the Things to them pertaining, as Youth, Health, Strength, Age, Weakneſs, and Sickneſs; wherefore whatſoever your Sickneſs at any Time is, know ye certainly, that it is God's Viſitation.*

John v. 14. Jam. v. 15.

Viſit. of the Sick. Exhor. 1.

I call this a Conſideration of the laſt Importance; becauſe ſo proper, and ſo likely, to quicken Men in

the Duties of Prayer and Repentance, Examination of their Lives and Conſciences, hearty Sorrow for their paſt Faults, ſerious and ſtedfaſt Reſolutions of Amendment, and every Holy Exerciſe, which may promote their living more to God's Glory, if he ſpare them, and grant Opportunities of proving their Sincerity by a better Life; or elſe may effectually prepare them for their great Change, if he ſee fit to take them from among Men. This would convince Men of the Abſurdity, the Wickedneſs, of a prepoſterous Method too much in uſe among our People; who generally begin their Remedies at the wrong End, and are in no Care to call in the Phyſician of the Soul, till the bodily Phyſicians have given them over. How much a juſter Notion had the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, what Order ought to be obſerved by Men in this Condition? *My Son* (ſays he) *in thy Sickneſs be not negligent, but pray unto the Lord, and he ſhall make thee whole; leave off from Sin, and order thy Hands aright, and cleanſe thy Heart from all Wickedneſs. Give a ſweet Savour and Memorial of fine Flour, and make a fat Offering, as not being. Then give Place to the Phyſician, for the Lord hath created him; let him not go from thee, for thou haſt need of him. There is a Time, when in their Hands there is good Succeſs: For they ſhall alſo pray unto the Lord, that he would proſper that which they give, for Eaſe and Remedy to prolong Life.*

Ecclus. xxxviii. 9—14.

Moſt excellent and ſeaſonable Advice, and ſtrictly methodical. For doubtleſs, when the Chaſtiſement of the Lord is upon us, our firſt Care ought to be, ſerious Application to him, that he would ſanctify his Corrections, and give a Bleſſing to the Means uſed for our Recovery. The more effectually to invite this Bleſſing, Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary; which may appeaſe and reconcile us to our juſtly offended God. When thus qualified for nearer and more ſolemn

Ver. 9.

Ver. 10.

lemn Approaches to him, (in correſpon- Ver. 11.
dence to the *Jewiſh* Sacrifices) Communi-
cating in the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, offering that Sacrifice of Thankſgiving for the Redemption of Mankind by the Death of the Holy Jeſus, and by the Acts of Praiſe, and Faith, and Charity, proper to be exerciſed there, teſtifying our Union with him our Head, and every Member of his Body Myſtical; devoting ourſelves entirely to his Service, and, by a perfectly contented Reſignation, ſubmitting to his Will concerning us, whether for Life or Death. When our Lamps are thus trimm'd, and our Souls prepared for his wiſe Diſpoſals; then is Ver. 12, 13.
the Time for human Advice and Reme-
dies. To which Recourſe muſt be had, as Means ordained by, and ſubordinate to him; not as ſufficient of themſelves, or capable of doing any Manner of Service without him. As a Proof of which Perſuaſion, I take the wiſe Man here to have left us a good Hint, for making choice of ſuch Phyſicians, who are likely to profit us by their Prayers, as well as by their Preſcriptions. For ſure it argues too little Ver. 14.
Senſe of the Hand God hath in all Events of this Kind, when we lay our Lives at the Mercy of impious Wretches, who do not only ſeem to have no Reverence for, or Regard to God; but live in open Contempt and Defiance of his Majeſty, and are much more like to draw down a Curſe by their Profaneneſs and Irreligion, than to give us any reaſonable Proſpect of a Bleſſing upon their Undertakings. So full is this Counſel of the Son of *Sirach* to our preſent Purpoſe; ſo perfectly agreeable to the Inference, ſuggeſted by the Method, in which our Lord himſelf proceeded with the Sick Man in this Day's Goſpel, (*viz.*) That the Sufferings of the Body have their original Cauſe in the Diſorders of the Soul; and that, as well on this Account, as becauſe the Soul is by far

the

the more precious Part of us; we never act regularly and chriſtianly in this Affair, except when the healing of theſe is preferr'd before, and leads the Way to the removing of the other.

This were moſt certainly the beſt Expedient for procuring, not only Recovery from, but Comfort under Diſeaſes and Infirmities. The Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of God's *making all* a good Man's *Bed in his Sickneſs*; that is, rendering it ſupportable, and more eaſy to him than it is to common Men. But how is this done, think we? Is not human Nature the ſame in every Man? Or can Virtue exempt any from the Senſe of Pain, and the Droopings of a Diſeaſe? The Anguiſh of the very beſt is doubtleſs as ſharp, and their Feeling is quick and tender, ſo far as the Body is concerned. But here is the Difference; That they endure no more than the Body is concern'd in. Their Pains are not pointed with the Reproaches of Guilt unpardoned, with the amazing Proſpects of an angry God and a gaping Hell, or any of thoſe Agonies and Terrors of Conſcience, which pierce the Wicked through and through, and rend his very Soul in pieces. They are ſuſtained by perfect Peace within; and, in the midſt of outward Sufferings, comforted by the Favour of God, and the Light of his Countenance ſhining in upon their Hearts. This brings Refreſhment and Relief in their Extremities. They can look through the Cloud, and behold a glorified Saviour, who did for them in the ſame Nature *grieve*, and droop, and bleed, and die, and yet is now at the right Hand of *God*. They hear this joyful Voice ſuſtaining them, *Son, be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee*. And if he think not fit to ſecond it with that other in this Goſpel, *Ariſe, and take up thy Bed and walk*; they are ſure to hear him ſay ſomething better, even, *Well done, good and faithful Servant; enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

Pſal. xli. 3.

Matth. xxv. 21.

I only

I only add in the laſt Place, that this Man's particular Diſtemper preſents us with a lively Image of every habitual Sinner. The Palſey is occaſioned by a general Relaxation of the Nerves and Muſcles; which, for want of the animal Spirits duly diſtributed, renders thoſe Parts in a Manner dead, and diſables them quite from the Diſcharge of their proper Functions. And ſuch is the Caſe of a hardened and cuſtomary Sinner, whom the Scripture calls *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*; becauſe incapable of exerting himſelf, in any Operations of the Spiritual and Divine Life. This Incapacity proceeds from thoſe Infirmities, which obſtruct the kindly Influences of the Spirit of God, the true and only Principle of Holineſs. Till therefore this impotent Wretch be brought to Chriſt; till he have likewiſe received the Bleſſing of Forgiveneſs; till ſuch Pardon and Reconciliation have prepared the Way for that Grace, which alone can give him Power to riſe, which alone can ſtrengthen him againſt falling again, which alone can inſpire him with Inclination and Ability to walk in the Way of God's Commandments, no Cure can be effected. And thus the Example ſet before us in the Goſpel, juſtifies the Wiſdom of the Collect for the Day. It proves the Truth and Juſtice of that Acknowledgment there made to God, that *without him we are not able to pleaſe him*; and it ſhews the Neceſſity of that Requeſt, which we ground upon this Acknowledgment; when beſeeching him *mercifully* to *grant that his Holy Spirit may in all Things direct and rule our Hearts, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

The Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O Almighty and moſt merciful God, of thy bountiful Goodneſs, keep us, we beſeech thee, from all Things that may hurt us; that we being ready both in Body and Soul, may cheerfully accompliſh thoſe Things that thou wouldſt have done, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Eph. v. 15.

15. In regard therefore the Difference is ſo great, between the Religion you have left, and that which you have now embraced; let your Behaviour be wiſe and cautious; tempered between an eaſy Compliance with Temptations, and an unſeaſonable Vehemence in your Carriage.

15. *SEE then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as Wiſe.*

16. Making the beſt of theſe bad Times of Perſecution, and not expoſing yourſelves to unneceſſary Dangers.

16. *Redeeming the Time, becauſe the Days are Evil.*

17. Judging diſcreetly, what are the proper Seaſons of expoſing yourſelves to Danger for the Sake of your Duty.

17. *Wherefore be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is.*

18. Give no Offence by any Intemperance and Exceſs, which in the Heathen Bacchanals was eſteemed an Act of religious Joy.

18. *And be not drunk with Wine, wherein is Exceſs; but be filled with the Spirit.*

19, 20. But let your Mirth and Joy be ſpiritual and holy, and expreſs'd not in Drunkenneſs, but in pious Hymns, *&c.* See Paraphraſe on Epiſt. 5 S. after *Epiph.*

19. *Speaking to yourſelves in Pſalms and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, ſinging and making Melody in your Heart to the Lord.*

20. *Giving Thanks always for all Things unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;*

21. See Epiſt. 3 S. after *Trin.* This refers more eſpecially to the ſeveral Conditions and Orders of Men; the Duties peculiar to which the Apoſtle immediately deſcends to, as ſo many Exemplifications of this general Rule of Submiſſion.

21. *Submitting yourſelves one to another in the Fear of God.*

COMMENT.

THE Wiſdom or Circumſpection, required by St. *Paul* in this Place, though it may very well be underſtood of Chriſtian Prudence in its utmoſt Extent; is yet by very eminent Interpreters, preſumed to bear a more eſpecial Regard to that Inſtance of it mentioned in my Paraphraſe. And the *Evil of the Days* brought as an Argument to enforce it, to mean that Sort of Dangers and Temptations more particularly, which the Enemies and Perſecutors of the Chriſtian Faith, and their Readineſs to take all Advantages of any Imprudence and want of Conduct, in the Profeſſors of it, did at that Time expoſe the *Epheſians* to. In this Senſe the Advice contain'd in the 15th, 16th, and 17th Verſes, is of the ſame Importance with that to the *Coloſſians*, *Walk in Wiſdom toward them that are without:* And with our Lord's Direction to his Diſciples, *Behold I ſend you forth as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves: Be ye therefore wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves.* Concerning which Prudence of Behaviour, and the proper Seaſons of declining Danger, Enough, I think, hath been obſerved from the Practice of our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, when withdrawing from his Enemies.

Col. iv. 5.

Matth. x. 16.

Goſp. for 5 *S. in* Lent.

The Fitneſs of that Method here preſcribed for expreſſing the Joy and Thankfulneſs and other pleaſing Affections of the Mind, as becomes Chriſtians, in ſpiritual *Songs*, and *Hymns* of Praiſe, (and particularly in that Collection of Pſalms, for which the Church hath always ſhewed an extraordinary Regard) hath likewiſe been ſufficiently demonſtrated in a former Diſcourſe.

Ver. 18, 19.

Epiſt. 5 *S. after* Epiph.

The Subject therefore, which at preſent I chooſe to inſiſt upon, is the Duty of Thankfulneſs. Which

could not be expreſs'd in Terms more full and forcible than thoſe at the 20th Verſe, *giving Thanks* always for all Things *unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* The Reaſonableneſs of doing this may appear, whether we conſider our Duty, or our Intereſt. I will briefly ſpeak to two Motives under each of theſe Heads: Shewing it, under the Former, to be an Act of Juſtice, and an Act of Religion; and under the Latter, to be ſuch as contributes to our Pleaſure, and to our Profit.

1. *Firſt*, Thankfulneſs is an Act of natural Juſtice: A common Principle, agreeable to the Practice of every Part of the Creation. All which are ſo ordered by Providence, as to ſuſtain the World, by reciprocal Supplies, and beneficial Returns of what they had formerly received. Thus the Waters of the Ocean feed and expand themſelves into Rivers; and thoſe Rivers wind into Channels, and run back to pay their Tribute to the Sea again. The Earth ſends up Vapours which thicken into Clouds; and thoſe Clouds deſcend again in fruitful Showers upon the Earth, and furniſh Matter for new Exhalations. The Ground gives its Product for the Suſtenance of Man and Beaſt; and that Product, by putrefying, Manures and fattens the Ground from whence it was taken. Man is the only Monſter of Ingratitude; and ſuch he cannot be neither, till he have vitiated his own Reaſon, and become a Reproach to human Nature. For nothing is more ſuitable to our firſt Notions of Morality, than that every Kindneſs ought to be paid back again. Thoſe large and generous Minds, who conſider the Comforts of Life, and the Conveniencies of Society, as owing to a friendly Intercourſe of good Offices between Man and Man, prove this Perſuaſion, by being as uſeful as poſſibly they can; and for any Good done to them, they imitate Nature; which reſtores manifold, and, for a ſmall Quantity of Seed, rewards the Sower with a plentiful Increaſe. And thoſe niggardly

gardly capricious Men, who affect to live by themſelves, and ſuffer none of their Neighbours to do them Service, do in effect confeſs this Principle. For, while they are too proud, or too humourſome, to receive a Kindneſs; they own, it is, becauſe they hate to be obliged, and conſequently, that every Benefit contracts a Debt. Hence is that general Reſentment and Abhorrence of Ingratitude, as an Argument of a baſe and abandoned Mind. 'Twas this cut *David* ſo deep, that the Man *who had eat of his Bread, ſhould lift up his Heel againſt him:* This, that aggravated the Treachery of *Judas*, and the Apoſtacy of the Devil himſelf; that Perſons, ſo ſignally favoured, ſo highly exalted, ſhould turn Betrayers, and Murderers, and Rebels. Hence it comes to paſs, that although ſeveral Vices, as Murder, and Rapine, the diſhonouring of our Beds, and the Injuring our good Names, are attended with more pernicious Conſequences; yet few, if any, are more ſhocking, or wound our Reputation deeper than this. Which could not be, did not all Mankind naturally concur in their Apprehenſions, how great a Branch of Equity Thanks are. And therefore the owning ourſelves obliged, though a Phraſe commonly of Courſe and Compliment, does yet carry a great deal of Signification at the Bottom. Bills and Bonds do indeed engage us with more Solemnity and Form: But Courteſies and Good-turns do the Thing as effectually; and a Man of Virtue and Honour will always think ſo, and will be ſure to behave himſelf accordingly.

It is true, we are not always in a Condition to make proportionable Returns. But where we want the Power, we ought to ſhew we do not want the Will. Requitals are neceſſary, where Opportunities offer: Otherwiſe, Thanks and Reſpect muſt ſupply their Place; that what we do, may teſtify what we would gladly do. And this is our Caſe with regard to Almighty God. Retributions in Kind he expects none:

The Perfection of his Nature, and the Weakneſs of ours, will not admit of any. But Acknowledgments he does demand and inſiſt upon; and the Graces which we cannot repay, we muſt not overlook, nor bury them in Silence. For,

2. *Secondly*, Thankſgiving is likewiſe poſitively commanded as an Act of Religion. We are required in the general to *do all to the Glory of God.* Not that we, ſtrictly ſpeaking, can add any Thing to his Glory; nor muſt that be ſuppoſed to depend upon ſuch poor impotent Creatures, as frail ſinful Men. But help to illuſtrate that Glory we may, by magnifying his Liberality, proclaiming it aloud, inviting and encouraging others to ſerve him, by cheerfully and entirely devoting ourſelves to a Maſter, whom we acknowledge infinitely Good, infinitely Bountiful; one, who does not only reward our Deſerts, but diſtributes his Gifts, abundantly above all, that the very beſt of us do, or ever can deſerve. And this is the genuine Interpretation of all our Thanks. This the Cauſe, why we are commanded *in every Thing, by Prayer and Supplication*, with Thankſgiving, *to let our Requeſts be made known unto God.* This juſtifies the Method of that Prayer, which our Lord himſelf was pleaſed to compoſe for our Uſe; wherein we are taught to aſk, firſt, that *our heavenly Father's Name may be hallowed*; and that *his Kingdom may come, and his Will be done*, before we preſume to beg *our daily Bread.* This the Reaſon, why God by the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Whoſo offereth me Thanks and Praiſe, he honoureth me*; and why the Apoſtle enjoins us here *always, and in all Things to give Thanks, becauſe* (as he elſewhere hath it) *this is the Will of God concerning us.* It ſhews, that we believe him the Diſpoſer of all our Affairs, and that we believe all his Diſpoſals to be wiſe and juſt and good; that all we receive from his Providence

1 Cor. x. 31.

Phil. iv. 6.

Matt. vi. 9, 10, 11.

Pſal. l. 23.

1 Theſſ. v. 18.

Providence is not a Debt but a Grace; an Overmeaſure which we could lay no Claim to. And upon theſe Accounts to inſiſt upon our Thanks is by no Means below Almighty God. 'Tis only to do juſtice to himſelf, to prevent our very great Crime of neglecting and undervaluing his Mercies, and to prove our Obligations to love and pleaſe him. For it is a certain and a reaſonable Maxim, that although the Perſon who does good Offices, could be content never to remember them; yet it is the unqueſtionable Duty of the Perſon, to whom they are done, never to forget them.

Now from hence it muſt needs follow, that every one, who forgets God's Goodneſs and loving Kindneſs, is exceedingly to blame. Becauſe theſe extend to every one, without Exception. Not to every one, in the ſame Sort and Degree, but (as hath been formerly obſerved) to every one, in ſeveral Sorts, and to a very great Degree. All have not Increaſe of Riches and Honour, a numerous Off-ſpring, a ſound Conſtitution and perfect Health, to bleſs God for. But, if we have not Abundance, have we not a Competency? If not a growing Fortune, have we not a comfortable and ſanctified Uſe of a ſmall one? If not that, neither, and we cannot ſubſiſt upon our own Poſſeſſions and Labour; yet have we not ſome good Friends, whoſe Hearts God hath opened to ſuſtain us out of theirs? If we have not gained in the Buſineſs of our Calling, like ſome more proſperous Neighbours; yet have we not eſcaped a World of Diſaſters, by which the Wealth of ſome others hath been diminiſhed? Did none, within our Knowledge, ever ſuffer by Floods, or Fire, or Storms, or Fraud, or Robbery, or War, or Captivity? And what made this Difference between us and them, but the diſtinguiſhing Providence of God? Though then ſome are in more flouriſhing Circumſtances than others; yet all have Reaſon to be thankful, that their own Circumſtances

Goſp. xii. *S. aft* Trin.

are ſo well. If they have not been raiſed by Proſperity; yet that they have been defended from, or at leaſt ſupported in, their Dangers and Adverſities; that they have not been afflicted; or that they were afflicted no more; or that they have been ſo to good Purpoſe. But ſuppoſing the moſt calamitous Condition of Sickneſs, and Sorrow, and Poverty, and Pain; is it not even then a Mercy, that we are ſtill in a State of Trial? That we are not yet cut off, and called to our laſt terrible Account, nor the great, the impaſſable Gulf fixed, between us, and all Happineſs, and all Comfort? For ſure no Miſeries of the preſent Life can be imagined ſo deplorable, but a wiſe and good Man will feel their Bitterneſs allayed, by conſidering, that they are not irreverſible; that they may, nay, that they muſt, ſhortly have an End: And that, in the mean while, they may, with our due Care and Improvement, become Inſtruments of adding to our everlaſting Bliſs. Thus, if we look at temporal Things only, (which yet bear no Proportion to the ſpiritual and eternal) it appears, that thoſe Men are unjuſt and irreligious, even to a Degree of Stupidity; who do not both diſcern the Bounty of God toward them, and pay him for it this moſt unqueſtionable Tribute of Praiſe and Thankſgiving.

II. But I have yet freſh Motives worth conſidering; ſuch as relate to our Intereſt: And prove this both a pleaſant and a profitable Virtue.

1. Firſt, I ſay, Thankfulneſs is a Duty full of Pleaſure. *My Lips* (ſays *David*) *will be glad, when I ſing unto thee, and ſo will my Soul, whom thou haſt delivered.* And again, *O praiſe the Lord, for it is a good Thing to ſing Praiſes unto our God, yea a joyful and a pleaſant Thing it is to be thankful.* Of all the Services God hath appointed, this ſeems to be ſingular, by the Exerciſe of it bringing no Regret, no Allay, not even to Men of carnal Minds, and very mean Attainments in Religion. Temperance

Pſal. lxxi. 21. —cxlvii. 1.

wages

wages a perpetual War with Appetite; Mortifications and Faſtings deny and ſubdue Fleſh and Blood: Alms take from one's ſelf that which is given to others; Prayer brings us nearer to, and maintains a familiar Correſpondence with, God; it obtains a Supply for Wants, and a Reſcue from Miſeries: But at the ſame Time it aſks Redreſs for, it awakens the Remembrance of, our Miſeries and Wants. And Things, which are painful to bear, cannot be eaſy to reflect upon. But Thankſgiving turns only the bright Side of our Fortunes towards us, and hides the dark and melancholy Part from our Sight. It preſents us with that, which we wiſh'd moſt vehemently to have; ſuch as we met with open Arms, when moving towards us; and therefore ſuch, as we cannot but look back upon with a ſenſible Reliſh and Delight. This Recollection is a Sort of acting our paſt Happineſs over again: It makes it in a Manner always preſent; and repeats the Enjoyment, while it refreſhes the Memory.

Doubtleſs the Generality of Chriſtians are therefore extremely unjuſt, not only to their great Benefactor in Heaven, but even to themſelves, by the Neglect of this Duty. For the Practice of it would go a great way, toward curing that querulous and fretful Temper, which utterly deſtroys their Quiet and Content. And, inſtead of giving way to black Thoughts, and aggravating every little Misfortune, it would teach them to weigh all Things in an even and juſt Balance. For, how partial or cruel ſoever any may in their dull Moods repreſent the Providence of God; yet, when they ſhall ſit down and bring their Croſſes and their Bleſſings to a fair Account; ſo aſtoniſhing a Diſproportion will quickly appear, as muſt needs ſtrike all their Murmurs dumb, both for the Weight and Number of their Comforts and their Sorrows. The Caſe and Diſpoſition of ſuch People reſembles that of *Jonah*; they rage at the withering of a Gourd, and forget the Miracle of the Whale's Belly.

Jon. i. 17.
—ii. 10.
—iv. 8, 9.

Their Calamities come ſeldom, and they cut deep, and leave broad and laſting Scars; their Mercies are renewed every Morning, every Moment, but yet no Mark of theſe is left behind. This is one great Cauſe, why we have ſo much Melancholy, ſo much complaining, ſo much Ill-humour in the World; and, for one really unfortunate, this is the Voice of many unthankful and unmindful Men: Whoſe Miſery is not, that they receive no Good, but that they ſee none, and remember none. This renders their Condition a great deal worſe, than if themſelves ſaid true. For none can be accountable for what was not received; but Woe to thee, ungrateful Wretch, who haſt received, and not improved, not enjoyed, nay who ſlandereſt and blaſphemeſt the Goodneſs of God, by lamenting thyſelf, as though thou haſt not received it.

2. *Secondly*, The Profit of this Duty is no leſs than the Delight of it. For it is in this Regard with God, as with wiſe and good Men; that nothing recommends to a ſubſequent Kindneſs more effectually, than decent Acknowledgments for a Former. His Goodneſs is a perpetual Spring, always overflowing, always communicating itſelf, in one Kind or other; and only directing its Streams, where they are moſt wanted, and beſt received. But if the Soil be barren and unthankful; he turns the Channel, and enriches ſome other Ground of a better Diſpoſition. So true it is of God's Gifts of every Kind, that to *him that hath* (that acknowledges and uſes what he hath thankfully) more *ſhall be given, and he ſhall have Abundance*; *But from him that hath not*, (from the ungrateful and unprofitable Receiver) *ſhall be taken away even that which he had before.*

Matth. xiii. 12.

But the Expectation of additional Bleſſings is not all. We are alſo to look at a ſanctified Uſe of thoſe we have already; and ſuch a favourable Aſſiſtance of Almighty God, as may order every Enjoyment to its proper

proper End. The Preacher's Obſervation concerning Riches is equally true of all temporal Advantages; that *there is a Time when they are kept for the Owners thereof, to their Hurt*; for tho' theſe Things are Inſtruments, yet they are but Inſtruments; they are by no Means ſufficient Cauſes, of our Happineſs. Not neceſſarily Good in themſelves; nor will they, without a ſupernatural Benediction and Influence, prove in the Event good to us. Meats and Drinks are made for Suſtenance, and naturally endued with a Nutritive Faculty: But, whether they ſhall ſtrengthen the Body, or nouriſh a Diſeaſe, will depend upon the Will of God, and the Management or Conſtitution of the Perſon. Health may be a Curſe, if made an Occaſion of indulging our Luſts; and Sickneſs proves a Bleſſing when it reclaims us from a wicked Courſe of Life. The Caſe is much the ſame with all the reſt. None of which have ſo direct a Tendency to Evil, that a Temper may not be found for converting them to Profit; nor are any of them ſo determined to Good, that they cannot miſs of their proper Aim and Efficacy. Nay, even Grace itſelf, though the Seed of Eternal Life in our Hearts, is yet capable of being *turned into Laſciviouſneſs*; and may produce *Thiſtles inſtead of Wheat, and Cockle inſtead of Barley*.

Eccleſ. v. 13.

Jude 4.

Job xxxi. 40.

But it is with the Unthankful only, that theſe Gifts have ſuch dire Effects; and, that the *Things which ſhould have been for their Wealth, prove an Occaſion of falling*. For God always follows Gratitude with his diſtinguiſhing Mercies. And in truth, it is one great Part of Gratitude to conſider, not only what is beſtowed, but by whom, and for what End, it is beſtowed: To walk worthy of, and profit by, and ſtudy how we may anſwer all the excellent Purpoſes of, God's Liberality to us. This makes us uſe Proſperity with Temper, and entertain Adverſity with Patience. This inclines the Almighty

Pſal. lxix. 23.

Phil. i. 6. Giver to *perfect every good Work he hath begun in us:* And to direct every Inſtance of his Bounty to our true and everlaſting Intereſts. Thankful to Him we cannot be, except our Lives expreſs it; and then the Reſult of our Gratitude is a Sanctifying every Diſpenſation of Providence to us. For this will tend to increaſe our Portion, if that be expedient; and if it be not, it will ſo diſpoſe our Hearts, that, be it leſs or more, the Advantage ſhall be equally certain. For the leaſt Degree thus improved ſhall ſuffice for accompliſhing that moſt merciful and beſt of all Deſigns: Even the bringing us at laſt to that happy Place, where we ſhall render continual Honour, and Praiſe, and Thanks, to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

See Goſpel for 2 S. after Trinity.

St. Matth. xxii. 1.

1. JESUS *ſaid,*

2. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son,*

3. *And ſent forth his Servants to call them that were bidden to the Wedding: and they would not come.*

4. *Again he ſent forth other Servants, ſaying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold I have prepared my Dinner: my Oxen and my Fatlings are killed, and all Things are ready: come unto the Marriage:*

5. *But they made light of it, and went their Ways, one to his Farm, another to his Merchandiſe:*

6. *And the Remnant took his Servants, and entreated them ſpitefully, and ſlew them.*

7. *But when the King heard thereof he was wroth: and ſent forth his Armies, and deſtroyed thoſe Murderers, and burnt up their City.*

8. *Then ſaith he to his Servants, The Wedding is ready, but they which were bidden, were not worthy.*

9. *Go ye therefore into the Highways, and as many as ye ſhall find, bid to the Marriage.*

10. *So thoſe Servants went out into the Highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the Wedding was furniſhed with Gueſts.*

11. *And when the King came in to ſee the Gueſts, he ſaw there a Man which had not on a Wedding Garment:*

12. *And he ſaith unto him, Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a Wedding Garment? and he was ſpeechleſs.*

13. *Then ſaid the King to the Servants, Bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, and caſt him into outer Darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.*

14. *For many are called, but few are choſen.*

COMMENT.

GREAT Part of this Scripture hath been formerly ſpoken to, upon Occaſion of another ſo very nearly allied to it, that, to the End of the *Tenth Verſe*, both are, in Subſtance and Deſign, exactly the ſame. Referring therefore my Reader back thither for ſo much of it; I ſhall only detain him with a few Remarks, upon ſome little Diverſity of Circumſtances and Expreſſions in the former Part; and two or three Reflexions, which more peculiarly belong to the latter Part, of this Day's Goſpel. *Goſp. for* 2 S. *after* Trin.

1. Now, *Firſt*, this Repreſentation differs from St. *Luke*'s, by calling it a Marriage Feaſt. Upon which Occaſion the Rejoicings of the *Jews* were ſo remarkably magnificent and ſolemn; that no Metaphor could poſſibly be thought on, capable of carrying the Point higher, or more worthy the Joys of the Meſſiah's Kingdom. But there was, beſides, a great Propriety in the Figure, with regard to the Thing ſignified by it. I mean,

mean, the Incarnation of the Son of God uniting the Divine and Human Nature in One Perſon; the joining all Believers in one myſtical Body, of which himſelf is the Head; the inviolable Affection expreſſed to his Spouſe the Church, by waſhing away her Deformities and Blemiſhes in his own Blood; and the inſeparable Converſation and mutual Delights, reſerved for the great Day of conſummating the Marriage in Heaven. All theſe are Reaſons for that Reſemblance being frequently uſed in the *New Teſtament*; as well as the Greatneſs of that Joy, of which they, who are now admitted to the Foretaſtes in the Kingdom of Grace, ſhall be eternally feaſted and filled with it in the Kingdom of Glory.

Eph. v. 23—32.

2 Cor. xi. 2.

Rev. xix. 6—9.

2. A *Second* Thing obſervable here is, that the Invitations at different Times, attributed by St. *Luke* to one Servant, are in this Paſſage aſcribed to ſeveral. In ſuch Circumſtances it is not the Manner of Parables to be critical, in regard they are incident and ornamental only. But, if we will deſcend to Niceties, by the Servants at the *Third Verſe* who invited beforehand, we may do well to underſtand *Moſes* and the Prophets, John *Baptiſt*, and, if you pleaſe, even *Jeſus* himſelf. By thoſe at the *Fourth*, who brought word of the Dinner being actually ready, thoſe Apoſtles and Diſciples, who preached Chriſt then crucified. For this Lamb already ſlain it was, which muſt correſpond to that Part of the Invitation, *My Oxen and my Fatlings are killed, and all Things are ready; come unto the Marriage.*

3. A *Third* Circumſtance, peculiar to this Paſſage, is the manner, in which theſe Refuſers are ſaid to have treated the Perſons, at whoſe Hands they had received ſuch gracious Invitations. Not content to turn the deaf Ear to all their kind Meſſages and repeated Importunities, they flew upon them with Rage and Spite implacable; loaded them with all Sorts of Injuries

Injuries and Indignities, and, with a moſt unrelenting as well as unreaſonable Barbarity, perſecuted, tormented, and put them to Death.

4. Once more, St. *Matthew* is particular in his mention of the Courſe taken by the King to expreſs his Indignation againſt ſuch unworthy and obdurate Contemners of his Majeſty and his Mercy. *He ſent forth his Armies, and deſtroyed thoſe Murderers, and burnt up their City.* Theſe two laſt Circumſtances are ſo exact a Deſcription of what the *Jews* did and ſuffered, ſhortly after our Lord's Death and Reſurrection; that nothing could more punctually determine the Intent of this Parable; or mark out the Events, then principally in view. The Cruelties they inflicted upon all, who dared to preach or profeſs *Jeſus Chriſt*; and the Return of unheard-of Cruelties upon their own City and Nation by the *Romans*, are too well known to need Enlargement. So are the many, the prodigious Tokens of Divine Wrath, which attended the Siege and Sacking of *Jeruſalem*; plain Indications of a particular Commiſſion from God, to act as Inſtruments of Vengeance upon an Ungrateful, Refractory, and Inhuman People; and ſuch as might well juſtify the Significance of that Phraſe, which ſays, this angry King ſent forth *his Armies*, and *deſtroyed them*. Ver. 7.

I have done with my Obſervations ariſing from the Variety of Circumſtances and Expreſſions, in the two Evangeliſts, who have left us this Parable. Let us now proceed to a very material Addition, made by St. *Matthew*, and entirely his own; from the 11th to the 14th *Verſe*. This miniſters a new Subject of Thought, and juſt Matter of Fear; by ſhewing, that a bare Compliance with the Invitations, and appearing at this Feaſt, would not ſuffice; ſince, even among them that came, we have an Inſtance of one, not only not received, but ſorely puniſhed, for not coming in a *Wedding Garment*. This opens a Scene of very weighty Speculations; ſome of which I ſhall touch upon, and then

then close with a brief Explanation of that Aphorism, wherewith our Lord shuts up the whole Parable.

The Apostle, speaking of the Church's Marriage to the Lamb, says, *to her it was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine Linen, clean and white; and the fine Linen is the Righteousness of Saints.* This Passage will help us in explaining the Wedding Garment; and shews, that by it are intended all that Purity of Mind and Conversation, all that Charity and those Good Works, which are the genuine Fruits and Evidences of a truly Christian Faith. So that the Person thrust out for want of such a Garment, is an Emblem of all those, who profess and receive, but do not live up to, the Principles of Christ's Religion. Their embracing of these, and being baptized into them, may pass for an Acceptance of the Invitation, and a coming to the Feast. But their coming in so irregular and indecent a Garb, not *putting off the Old Man with his Affections and Lusts*, nor *putting on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness*, do as effectually exclude them from the saving Benefits of this Feast, as if they had never been persuaded of the Truth, and so had never come at all.

Rev. xix. 8.

Eph. iv. 22—24.

But how shall we account for this Defect not having been discovered, except by the King himself, *when he came in to see the Guests?* The Good Works here designed, are expected to be a *Light shining before Men*, such as *they may see*, and by that Sight be induced to *glorify* their *Father which is in Heaven.* 'Tis true, the Works themselves are visible; and they, who behold them, are in Reason and Charity bound to think the Persons good, who do them. But it is no less true, that many Actions, in Appearance good, may proceed upon false, indirect, and mean Views; and be owing to corrupt and wicked Principles. What Men do, others may know. But for what Designs, and upon what

Ver. 11.

Matt. v. 16.

what Motives they act, God only and their own Consciences know. And therefore this is one of the Discoveries, reserved to the last Great Day of Enquiry. So that I conceive, we shall not do amiss to interpret this Wedding Garment of the inward Holiness and Sincerity of Men. Between which, and the Counterfeit Shew of Goodness, none but this King is able to discern; and without which no outward Guise or Face of Religion, how artfully soever put on, can stand us in any stead. For all, who *do* not *the Will of God from the Heart*, and who study to please Men rather than him, are Hypocrites, and must expect the Hypocrites Portion: Which, we know, as well as that of Unbelievers, is to be *cut asunder*, and condemned to *weeping and gnashing of Teeth*.

Eph. vi. 6.

Matt. xxiv. 51.

A severe indeed, but withal, it must be confessed, a just Punishment. For, as the not having on a *Wedding Garment* is therefore a Crime, because such Indecency betrays a Disrespect, and a Contempt of the Solemnity and the Master of it: So the Want of that which is signified by this Garment, is aggravated by the Dishonour it puts upon Almighty God. And this is very grievous, and very manifest; whether we suppose this Want to consist, in dissembled Piety, or in open Irreligion.

Dissimulation is a Fault, which, when detected, every Man naturally takes ill; because it implies an Opinion of Weakness in the Party thus practised upon. For surely were it not for the Hopes of Concealment, there would be no such Thing as a Dissembler in the World. How great an Indignity then must it needs be to offer this Affront to Almighty God, the *Searcher of Hearts*, that *understands our very Thoughts*, that *requires Truth in the inward Parts*, before whom *all Things are naked and open*, and who hath expressly declared, that he will *bring every secret*

1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psal. li. 6. Heb. iv. 13.

Eccles. xii. 14.

Thing

Thing into Judgment? This is in Effect to rob him of one of his moſt glorious Attributes; and to deal with him, as if he were ſuch a deceivable Creature as our ſelves. And common Senſe will tell us, how juſt an Indignation a Procedure ſo diſingenuous, ſo diſhonourable, ſo vain as this, muſt needs move in the Majeſty of the juſt and jealous God.

On the other hand, open Irreligion in a Chriſtian brings publick Scandal upon a Religion, which is, of all others, beſt fitted to make Men eminently good. It utterly evacuates the main End of it; which is to correct and refine depraved Nature, and to raiſe Men to a Spiritual and Divine Life. It furniſhes the moſt perfect Rules, and ſets before us the moſt noble Examples, threatens the dreadfulleſt Puniſhments, excites by the moſt excellent Rewards, and miniſters the moſt powerful Aſſiſtances to theſe Purpoſes, of any that is, or ever was, in the World.

Now, though ſomewhat may be ſaid in mitigation of their Crimes, upon whom the Goſpel hath never ſhined: yet what Plea can be found in bar to Juſtice, againſt ſuch as live under the cleareſt Light, and yet walk on in Darkneſs; that grope, and ſtumble, and fall at Noon-day? Undoubtedly the abſurdeſt Mixture in the World is that of a Chriſtian Faith and a Heatheniſh Converſation. And as it is the moſt abſurd, ſo is it the moſt inexcuſable. Hence I take it to be, that the Perſon in this Parable is ſaid to have been *ſpeechleſs*: *i. e.* ſtruck dumb with Confuſion, and the Reproaches of his own Guilt. For what Anſwer is that Man capable of making, who profeſſes one Rule, and proceeds by another? Who lives in conſtant Contradiction, not only to the Laws of God, but to the Senſe, and Dictates, and Acknowledgments, of his own Breaſt?

Well were it, if as One ſuch only is taken notice of here, ſo the Number of profligate Believers were proportionably ſmall! But, alas! this is done, according to the uſual Decency of our Lord's Parables, to avoid

Offence

Offence or Diſcouragement, by extenuating the worſe and melancholy Side of the Caſe. This one then is, or ought to be, Warning ſufficient to us all; that we be not wanting to ourſelves, in the Ornaments becoming our Profeſſion. The Grace of God is ever at hand, ever ready to provide us with this Garment; and nothing but our own Negligence or Folly, can either ſully it, or diveſt us of it.

Laſtly, What hath been ſaid on this, and the like Occaſion formerly, may ſuffice to inſtruct us, who are the *Called*, and who the *Choſen* of God. All, to whom the Knowledge of Chriſt and his Religion is come, whether they embrace it or not; and thoſe that embrace it, whether, after embracing it, they live agreeably to it or not; all theſe are the *Called*. And they who do embrace, and live up to it, theſe only are the *Choſen*. Choſen freely, becauſe without any Thing on their Part to deſerve, but not ſo, as that nothing ſhould be requiſite on their Part to incline, this Choice. For thoſe Works, which are by no Means to be allowed as a *meritorious* Cauſe, becauſe accepted only in and for the Sake of Chriſt; (the only meritorious Cauſe of our Salvation) are yet neceſſary, in the Quality of an Inſtrumental and Conditional Cauſe, becauſe *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Heb. xii. 14.

The Miniſters, the Word of God, and his Holy Sacraments, are the Means, whereby we are ordinarily Called. To neglect theſe is to reject God's Call: To attend them hypocritically and formally, and reſt upon theſe Ordinances without a Life ſuitable to them, is to come without a Wedding Garment. To hear, and read, and pray, and communicate, and live accordingly, is to follow the Apoſtle's Advice, (which he would never have left us, if we had no Part or Concern in this great Work ourſelves) that I mean, of *giving all Diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure.* 2 Pet. i. 10. Which that we may effectually do, let us earneſtly beſeech God, as directed in the Collect for this

Day, *of his bountiful Goodneſs to keep us from all Things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in Body and Soul, may chearfully accompliſh thoſe Things that he would have done, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

The One and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

GRant, we beſeech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful People Pardon and Peace, that they may be cleanſed from all their Sins, and ſerve thee, with a quiet Mind, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE. Eph. iv. 10.

10. Take Courage in the Chriſtian Combat ye are called to; and ſuſtain yourſelves by Conſideration of His Power, whoſe Grace is able to ſuſtain you againſt all your Enemies.

10. *MY Brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.*

11. In fighting with whom it will be neceſſary for you to make uſe of that complete Armour, provided for all who fight God's Battles, that ſo ye may be in every Part defended againſt the Stratagems of the Devil.

11. *Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil.*

12. For the Enemies ye have to encounter, are not Men only, but evil Spirits, which ſtill rule in the Hearts of ignorant Heathens and Perſecutors; and have their Stations on high in the Regions of the Air.

12. *For we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places.*

13. Let no Part therefore of this Armour of God be neglected; that ye may be able to keep your paſt Advantages, and not give out, or be wearied and ſubdued by any Conflicts ye ſhall come into.

13. *Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil Day, and having done all to ſtand.*

14. *Stand therefore, having your Loins girt about with Truth, and having on the Breaſtplate of Righteouſneſs:*

15. *And your Feet ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace;*

16. *Above all, taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked.*

17. *And take the Helmet of Salvation, and Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:*

14, 15, 16, 17. See the Comment.

18. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perſeverance, and Supplication for all Saints;*

18. To theſe defenſive Weapons ye muſt add your moſt earneſt Prayers, and your conſtant Watchfulneſs.—Perſevering in both theſe, and interceding with God for all Chriſtians in general, that they alſo may come off ſucceſsfully in this ſpiritual Encounter.

19. *And for me, that Utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my Mouth boldly, to make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel:*

20. *For which I am an Ambaſſador in Bonds: that therein I may ſpeak boldly as I ought to ſpeak.*

19, 20. For Me in particular, that God would give me Opportunity of preaching his Goſpel publickly and courageouſly, as I now ſuffer Impriſonment for diſcharging my Commiſſion from God in that Reſpect.

COMMENT.

THE Epiſtle for the laſt Lord's Day made mention of the *Evil Days*, that is, the Seaſon of great Calamity and Danger, then lying upon the Church of *Epheſus*. This, at preſent under Conſideration, gives a particular Account, wherein the Evil of thoſe Days conſiſted; what Courſe was to be taken for fortifying themſelves againſt it; and what Behaviour was neceſſary, in order to their Safety in it. I ſhall therefore, as clearly and as briefly as I can, ſpeak to the three following Points. *Firſt*, The Danger of theſe *Epheſians*, and in Proportion of Chriſtians in

general; deſcribed here at the 11th and 12th Verſes: *Secondly*, The Armour of God, which they are exhorted here to put on, as their Defence and Security: And *Laſtly*, the Directions for ſo demeaning themſelves, as that they might come off with Honour and Safety, in this dangerous Encounter.

I. I begin with the Danger of theſe *Epheſians*, deſcribed in thoſe Words, *that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil. For we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places.*

The Devil is that great Enemy of Mankind, whom the Scripture ſo often repreſents, as continually intent upon the eternal Ruin of Souls. And, for inſtructing us how formidable this Enemy is, we have him ſometimes ſet forth under Characters that ſpeak the utmoſt Malice and Rage. Thus St. *Peter* compares him to *a roaring Lion*, that *goes about continually ſeeking whom he may devour.* But Beaſts of Prey are what we expect no better from; and therefore we take Care to avoid and ſtand upon our Guard againſt them. The Danger were in this reſpect but ſingle, were Force and Fierceneſs all we had to fear; and open Aſſaults the whole, we are concerned to make Proviſion for. Whereas it is a terrible Aggravation of Ours, that the Foe we have to engage, is no leſs ſubtle, than violent and implacable. The *Wiles* mentioned here, are therefore thoſe Ambuſhes and Snares he lays for us; the Stratagems, by which he over-reaches, the Deceits by which he blinds us, and the Flatteries and counterfeit Appearances of Friendſhip, by which, like *Joab*, in the Caſe of *Amaſa*, he pretends to *kiſs*, that he may ſtab us to the Heart. This *cunning Craftineſs, whereby he lies in wait*, Men are too ſeldom aware of. And therefore Multi-

1 Pet. v. 8.

2 Sam. xx. 9, 10.

Eph. iv. 14.

tudes

tudes are deſtroyed, when they leaſt ſuſpect it. They truſt to that beautiful Face he puts on, when *transforming himſelf into an Angel of Light*; and are eaſily ſurpriſed by an Enemy, whom the Habit and Countenance of a Friend gave them no manner of Warning to reſiſt, or make eſcape from. 2 Cor. xi. 14.

And yet even this Danger, great as we have ſeen, is much increaſed, by the Multitude, and the Condition of the Inſtruments employed in it. Such are, in the *firſt* place, Wicked Men, meant here by *Fleſh and Blood*. It being an Idiom, uſed in Scripture, to deſcribe any Whole (as here the Human Nature) by ſome of the principal Parts, of which it is compounded. And we muſt obſerve, that the Apoſtle, in ſaying *we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood*, does not mean to exclude them, but to include others. He warns us, that theſe are not the only, not that theſe are not any of the Enemies we have to combat with. The Malice and Envy, the Injuries and Vexations, the Oppoſition and Perſecution, in which both Jews and Heathens, joined againſt the Chriſtian Faith and its Profeſſors, are comprehended under Fleſh and Blood. And ſo are likewiſe all the Errors and falſe Doctrines, whereby artful Men labour to corrupt this Faith; and ſo again are all the ſofter Methods of ill Perſuaſion and ill Example, the treacherous Allurements to flattering Promiſes of Favour and Friendſhip, Security and Advantage, made uſe of to cajole and tempt us, or any ſinful Compliances. Theſe all are meant by Fleſh and Blood; as well as that Bitterneſs and Violence, whoſe End it was to diſcourage the Stedfaſtneſs of Chriſtians, and to affright them from their Duty.

But theſe, though very many and very dangerous, are not, it ſeems, the worſt of our Spiritual Adverſaries. There are *Principalities and Powers* alſo. Terms uſed in Scripture to denote the Angels, Good or Bad indifferently; becauſe referring to the different Orders

See Eph. i. 21.
—— iii. 10.
Coloſſ. i. 16.
1 Pet. iii. 22.

and Distinctions, and different Degrees of Power, in which both Sorts are constituted. But several Texts have restrained these Titles to the Evil Angels; without leaving us at liberty, to understand the whole Species of those intellectual Beings. Thus St. *Paul* seems to do, when denying, that *Angels, or Principalities, or Powers,* (any the most elevated and potent among them) *shall be able to separate us from the Love of God in Christ.* Thus he plainly does, when affirming our Blessed Saviour to have *spoiled, and triumphed over, Principalities and Powers, by his* Death. And thus most evidently in the Place before us, by calling these *the Rulers of the Darkness of this World,* and *spiritual Wickednesses* (or as some, wicked Spirits) *in high Places.* The true Importance whereof seems to be, that such are Officers and Ministers of the Devil: Whom our Lord, more than once, calls the *Prince of the World*; and St. *Paul,* in the *Second* of this Epistle, (a Passage which gives great Light to the Characters of his subordinate Powers mentioned here) stiles him, *The Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience.*

Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Coloss. ii. 15.

John xii. 31. — xiv. 30. — xvi. 11.

Chap. ii. 2.

To explain this a little more fully; let it be observed, that among the Jews and Heathens also there prevailed an Opinion of all the Regions of the Air being full of Spirits, ranged in order Military, and punctually obedient to the Command of their respective Chiefs. To this the Passages, just now referred to, have given so much Countenance; that many Pious and Learned Christians have thought the same. And I conceive, we may venture to say, it hath generally been believed, that, as there are Multitudes of Good Angels, constantly attending upon God's faithful Servants, doing kind Offices for them, and by all Means in their Power promoting their Safety and Happiness: So there are likewise Multitudes of Evil Angels,

Angels, as conſtantly waiting about, and contriving the Miſery and Deſtruction of Men. So that, as the Former are Miniſters of God employed by him for our Good; the Latter are Miniſters, whom the Devil, by God's Permiſſion, employs for our Hurt and Miſchief. And notwithſtanding the Maſters and the Purpoſes they ſerve be as different as is poſſible; yet in this both Sorts agree, that each are continually intent upon that very Thing, to which each are reſpectively appointed. Theſe have been ſuppoſed to be Inſtruments and Occaſions, not only of the Good and Ill Events that befal us; but alſo in great Meaſure of the Good and Ill Actions done by us. This they are preſumed to do, by working upon our Imaginations and Affections, by the Objects, they lay before our Senſes, by the manner and light in which they repreſent theſe, by the Thoughts they ſuggeſt, and the Opportunities they offer, for determining us to the one, or the other Kind of them. So that, as our Safety and our Virtue are owing to an inviſible and mighty Protection and Aſſiſtance; our Sin and Ruin are likewiſe brought about, by Enemies of unwearied Watchfulneſs and wonderful Activity. Enemies, upon one Account, formidable above all others: becauſe both they, and their Attempts upon us, are ſubtle and unſeen; ſuch as work in, and with, and by, the Paſſions and Corruptions of our own Minds, even when we are leaſt aware of any ſuch Operation.

II. As the Enemies we muſt engage with, ſo are the Arms that muſt defend us from them, of a Spiritual Nature alſo. And theſe come now in the *Second* Place to be conſidered: Which ſhall be briefly done, by obſerving the Nature, and the Uſes, of each of them, as here deſcribed.

Firſt then, We are commanded to *have our Loins*

girt about with Truth. The Uſe of a Girdle is Two-fold. It contributes to our Activity, by keeping all the Under Garments cloſe and tight, and preventing the Hindrances which come from their flying looſe about us. And it contributes to our Strength, by ſupplying the Place of Bones; and keeping thoſe Parts between the upper and lower Body firm, which Nature hath left liable to bend and yield, and ſo to great Enfeeblings by being, in the Heat of Action, wrenched and overſtrained. The former Conſideration ſeems more particularly to concern the Prieſts under the Law; who were commanded to make this a Part of their Habit: And Servants, who, in thoſe Countries where long and looſe Garments were worn, could not, without great Inconvenience, want a Part of Cloathing ſo neceſſary for Expedition. The latter more eſpecially, (but both indeed) make it ſo eſſential to Soldiers, that the whole of their Armour is frequently implied by it. To Servants our Lord applies it, by commanding his Diſciples to *let their Loins be girded*, as a Mark of their Readineſs to receive their Maſter. To either Servants or Soldiers we may ſuppoſe thoſe Words of St. *Peter* ſpoken, *Wherefore gird up the Loins of your Mind, be ſober, and hope unto the End.* But here it is manifeſtly made a Part of the Military Habit: And *Truth* is the Girdle, which every Soldier is to be girded withal.

Exod. xxviii. 4, 40.

Luke xii. 35, 36.

1 Pet. i. 13.

Now by *Truth* here I underſtand the Goſpel of Chriſt; and by being *girded* with that Truth, ſuch a firm Perſuaſion of all the Doctrines contained there, as ſtrengthens the Weakneſſes of Human Nature, and will not ſuffer us to give way, either to the Corruptions or the Terrors, the Threats or the Allurements, which would ſhake our Belief, or taint our Sincerity in the Profeſſion of it. For conſtant Experience

ence ſhews, how much theſe Doctrines, rightly underſtood, contribute to our ſpiritual Strength and Activity; and how manifeſtly the Errors contrary to them, do weaken and hinder us in our Chriſtian Warfare.

2. The next Advice is to *have on the Breaſtplate of Righteouſneſs*: A juſt and holy Converſation. Such as is at once a Conſequence, and an Evidence of the Sincerity ſpoken of before. Such as is careful, not only not to be reproached with Evil, but to ſhine in good Works. And this is very fitly called the *Breaſtplate*, the proper Uſe of which is to defend the Heart: Whether we conſider this as the Seat of the Affections, which the Cuſtom of doing well will render impregnable againſt the Temptations to Sin; or whether we conſider it as the Seat of the Conſcience, which, while a good Life preſerves it unwounded by Guilt and Shame, proves the beſt Support againſt Afflictions and Diſquiet, and the ſtrongeſt Defence from the Malice of Devils and wicked Men.

3. A *Third* Direction is to *have our Feet ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace*. The Account how *Goliah* the Champion of the *Philiſtines*, was dreſſed out for the Field, takes notice, that he had *Greaves of Braſs upon his Legs*. And nothing is more uſual in the Poets and Hiſtorians, than a mention of Boots, as one Part of the Soldiers Equipment. A neceſſary Part no Doubt to defend the Feet and Legs in their Marches, from the Heat and Roughneſs of the Ways; but eſpecially, from thoſe ſharp Stakes, which were driven into the Ground to gall, or other Obſtructions laid to ſtop, the Enemy in his Paſſage. Of theſe the Jews in particular are ſaid to make Uſe, upon the Approach of *Holofernes* and his Army: And the original Word, tranſlated their *Impediments*, being the very ſame, which we ſo often find rendered by *Offences* in the *New Teſtament*, may do us ſome Service, toward a right

1 Sam. xvii. 6.

σκάνδαλα.

a right Underſtanding of the Defence provided here againſt the Dangers of this Kind.

The Goſpel of Peace may be ſo called, either becauſe it is a ſure and ſolemn Declaration of Peace to Sinners, reconciled to God by Jeſus Chriſt: Or becauſe it lays upon all its Profeſſors indiſpenſable Obligations to Peace with all Mankind. In this latter Senſe it ſupplies the Place of the military Shoes; by preſerving that Temper in our Minds, and that Conduct in our Actions and common Converſation, which neither gives Offence to others, nor is apt to take it. Thus it does, as it were, defend the *Feet*, by warding off thoſe Reſentments and Uneaſineſſes, with which in common Converſation the injurious Dealings of wicked and malicious People are apt to gall Men eaſy to be provoked, and to prove very dangerous Temptations by ſo doing. And, as this Diſpoſition ſaves the ill Conſequences of Malice and Perſecution; ſo does it, in ſome Meaſure, prevent Perſecution itſelf; by ſecuring Men againſt all Enemies, not yet arrived to that Degree of Barbarity, which *harms even thoſe which are followers of that which is Good.* In the former Senſe, the Comforts reſulting from a Mind at peace with God, though they do not keep off all feeling of Afflictions and Wrongs, yet do they not ſuffer theſe to become an Occaſion of ſtumbling or falling, by terrifying us from, or diſcouraging us in, our Duty. And in both Senſes this is properly called the *Preparation* or Readineſs of *the Goſpel of Peace*, becauſe it prepares Men for any Conflicts they ſhall meet with; and arms them againſt all Obſtructions, thrown in their Way on purpoſe to ſtop or retard their Chriſtian Courſe.

4. A *Fourth* and Principal Part of this Armour is Faith, recommended here in particular Manner to be *taken above all, as a Shield, wherewith we ſhall be able to quench the fiery Darts of the Wicked.* By *fiery* Darts ſome underſtand poiſonous and mortal, as thoſe *Serpents* are called *fiery*, whoſe Stings

Numb. xxi. 6.

were

were full of Venom. Others think it an Alluſion to thoſe red hot iron Balls, uſed to be ſlung in Sieges eſpecially, to ſet Fire to any combuſtible Matter they light upon. Theſe *Darts* no Doubt are Temptations, by which our natural Paſſions, like that combuſtible Matter, are ſubject to be inflamed, but which, when the impenetrable Shield of Faith is interpoſed, are received and beaten back again without any Manner of Damage. Mean while, by comparing Faith to a Shield, its univerſal Efficacy is intimated. For, whereas other Parts of this Armour are preſcribed for the Defence of ſome one Part of the Man; this, by being dexterouſly managed, and oppoſed to the Blow whereſoever directed, is a Guard and Cover to the whole Man. The Fitneſs of which Metaphor, in reſpect both of the Nature of this Virtue, and of its Sufficiency for repelling and overcoming Temptations, I have no need to enlarge farther upon now, after what hath been diſcourſed upon this Subject heretofore. *Epiſt. for S. i. after* Eaſter.

5. Another neceſſary Part of our Spiritual Armour is the *Helmet of Salvation*, or (as this Apoſtle elſewhere explains himſelf) *the Hope of Salvation*. A due Senſe (that is) of the ineſtimable Prize, promiſed to them that conquer; and an aſſured Expectation of obtaining it, provided we *ſtrive lawfully*. The Contemplation of this incorruptible Crown is very fitly compared to an Helmet: That Defence, which guards our principal and moſt vital Part, the Seat of our Underſtanding, and the Source of our animal Powers. For, where this Hope prevails, it will effectually ſecure us againſt all Attempts upon our Life, made by Suggeſtions to Sin: Whoſe Force and Danger chiefly conſiſt in ſuch Motives, as are in no Degree comparable to thoſe Advantages, which muſt be forfeited and loſt by any wicked Compliances. And therefore we need not doubt the Power of that Preſervative, which fully perſuades and ſatisfies the Mind that all Temptations bid Ver. 17. 1 Theſſ. v. 8.

us

us infinitely to our Loſs, and puts us upon ſuch Meaſures, as it cannot poſſibly be, at any Time, or under any Circumſtances, conſiſtent with our Intereſt to go into.

6. Concerning the laſt Particular, *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*; I have taken Occaſion to deliver myſelf at large when conſidering the Experiment made of its wonderful Efficacy, and the Pattern ſet us for the Uſe of it; by the Victorious *Captain of our Salvation*; who did with it *hew the Snares of the Ungodly in Pieces*, when tempted by the Devil in the Wilderneſs.

See Goſp. for S. i. *in* Lent.

I conclude my *Second* Head with theſe two Remarks. (1.) That this is ſtiled the *Armour of God*; and that, not only on the Account of the Service it does in promoting Godlineſs, but becauſe it is entirely formed and furniſhed by him. The *Truth* and the *Righteouſneſs*, the *Peace* and the *Faith*, the *Salvation* and the *Word*, are his Gifts. And thus what Heathen Poets feigned to be done for their Heroes, is actually done for every truly Chriſtian Combatant. The Moral of their Fiction being unqueſtionable and juſt; that no Armour, except that of Divine Original, is ſo tempered, as to render us invulnerable in the Day of Battle.

(2.) It deſerves our very diligent Attention, that, in order to our Safety, the *whole* Armour of God is abſolutely neceſſary. Profeſſion of the *Truth* will not ſuffice without Practice; nor Works of *Righteouſneſs* without *Peace*, and ſo on. But all together will enable us to *withſtand in the Evil Day, and having done all to ſtand.* And of this alſo the Philoſophy, or rather the Religion of the Poets had ſome Notion. Which, finding a Neceſſity of leaving their Heroes mortal, did, for that Purpoſe, contrive to leave ſome One Part unguarded, and thither to direct the Weapon of the Enemy.

III. I come now, in the laſt Place, to obſerve the Directions given to theſe *Epheſians*, for ſo deporting themſelves againſt thoſe Enemies under my *Firſt*, and

and in the Management of this Armour under my *Second* Head, that they might come off with Safety and Honour in their dangerous Encounter. Of which very briefly.

1. By repreſenting the Multitude and the Quality of our Enemies under the *Firſt* Head, the Apoſtle plainly intends to awaken our Care and provoke us to Action. And this Point indeed ought to be more frequently and more ſeriouſly laid to Heart, than generally it is. For to what, but the Want of this Conſideration can we aſcribe the wretched Negligence and Sloth, the Thoughtleſſneſs and profound Security, in which the greater Part of Chriſtians ſpend their Days? Alas! Our Danger calls for all our Activity and Thought; and all is little enough, to obtain Victory at laſt. But then do we moſt effectually give Advantage to, and take Part with our Enemies, when we ſeem to forget that we have any Enemies at all. And Their Defeat in this Spiritual War is unavoidable, who ſay to their own Souls, *Peace, Peace,* when there is not, cannot be, Peace.

2. By the Subject of my *Second* Head, we are taught not to be diſcouraged or ſink into Deſpair, by Reaſon of the Danger deſcribed under the *Firſt*. This ſhews us where our Strength lies; that neither are we left naked and defenceleſs, nor are the Foes, we have to wreſtle with, invincible. To have bidden us *be ſtrong*, and *ſtand* (as we ſay) upon our own Legs againſt ſuch Enemies, had indeed been moſt abſurd. But when we are commanded to be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, to put on the Armour of God*, and to reſiſt under his Aſſiſtance and Protection; this proves them that are with us, to be more and mightier than all that are, or can be, againſt us. It ſhews that we go out againſt them in the Name of the Lord of Hoſts, the God of Battles; and under the Cover of one, who can, nay who actually did, conquer them long ago. It proves, that Courage and Vigour,

Vigour, Reſiſtance, and Reſolution, Diligence and Perſeverance, are required on our Part. We muſt fight, and maintain our Ground, and not expect Deliverance and Conqueſt without our own Endeavours: But, if we continue fighting, we ſhall not fail both to keep and get Ground; becauſe armed and ſtrengthened by one, who will not fail to bring us off, when thoſe Endeavours are ſincere and conſtant.

3. In order hereunto it is neceſſary, that, as our Exigencies and Wants are, ſo our Requeſts for ſeaſonable Recruits in this War ſhould be, preſſing and continual. That no Opportunity be loſt by our Neglect, nor any Aſſiſtances either withheld or withdrawn, for want of Application. And, becauſe the Danger and the Cauſe are common, our Concern muſt be ſo too. Ourſelves cannot be ſafe without that Charity, which gives us an Intereſt in the Safety of every Chriſtian: For no Member of this myſtical Body is made or fights for, and therefore none ought to regard, or pray for himſelf alone. And becauſe in this, as in the body Natural, every Member is not of the ſame Uſe and Conſequence; therefore our Prayers ſhould be, in more eſpecial Manner, for thoſe, by whoſe Labours and the Succeſs of them, the Welfare of the whole is more eſpecially promoted. Such was St. *Paul*, with regard to theſe *Epheſians*; ſuch in Proportion are all Miniſters of the Goſpel to their reſpective Charges. Each whereof may very reaſonably beſpeak, and each ought certainly to be heard when he does beſpeak, the conſtant Interceſſions of his People. For though we are not *Embaſſadors in Bonds*, yet we are all *Embaſſadors*; if not ſtrictly and firſt to *make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel*; yet to preſs Faith and Obedience to it, in Places where it is already known; to inſtruct the many Ignorant even there; to comfort the Feeble-minded; to ſupport the Weak; to warn the Unruly; and to oppoſe Gainſayers. In all which we have great Occaſion for the Prayers of good Chriſ-

tians, *that Utterance may be given to us, that we may open our Mouths boldly*; and, in deſpight of Difficulties and Diſcouragements, *may ſpeak* upon all Occaſions *as we ought to ſpeak.*

The One and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. John iv. 46.

46. *THERE was a certain* * *Nobleman, whoſe Son was ſick at Capernaum.*

47. *When he heard that Jeſus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and beſought him, that he would come down and heal his Son: For he was at the Point of Death.*

48. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto him,* * *Except ye ſee Signs and Wonders, ye will not believe.*

49. *The Nobleman ſaith unto him, Sir, come down ere my Child die.*

50. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, Go thy way, thy Son liveth. And the Man believed the Word that Jeſus had ſpoken unto him, and he went his way.*

51. *And as he was now going down, his Servants met him, and told him ſaying, Thy Son liveth.*

52. *Then enquired he of them the Hour when he began to amend. And they ſaid unto him, Yeſterday at the* * *ſeventh Hour the Fever left him.*

53. *So the Father knew it was at the ſame Hour in the which Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thy Son liveth. And himſelf believed, and his whole Houſe.*

54. *This is again the ſecond Miracle that Jeſus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.*

PARAPHRASE.

46. * An Officer in the Court of *Herod* the Tetrarch.

48. * No Evidence, leſs than that of Miracles done before your own Eyes, will be accepted by you, as ſufficient Confirmation of the Truth of my Doctrine.

52. * About one in the Afternoon his Diſtemper went quite off.

54. This is the ſecond Miracle that Jeſus did in *Cana* in *Galilee*: For thither it was that the Nobleman came to him. *See the Beginning of* Ver. 46.

COMMENT.

THE Converſion of this Nobleman and his Family is the more remarkable, becauſe he is the firſt Perſon of that Quality and Station, who ſtands upon Record for receiving the Faith.

Ver. 46. His Stile here is ſuch, as ſeems to imply not only Dignity and Honour, but alſo Office and great Authority. From ſuch our Saviour generally found, not Neglect only, but even Averſion, to him and his Doctrine. And, by ſome Circumſtances in this Account, Reaſon is given us to ſuſpect, that the Perſon concerned in it was once no better diſpoſed.

Ver. 47. For, when in great Extremity he beſought our Lord's Aſſiſtance, the Anſwer plainly reproves a weak, and ſlow, and too ſcrupulous Faith: Which, though delivered in general Terms, did yet, moſt probably, point at Him in particular; as one, whom no Evidence of Doctrine, no credible Teſtimony, nor any Thing

Ver. 48. leſs than Miracles, brought home to his own Senſes and his own Benefit, would convince. To this Infirmity however our Lord graciouſly condeſcended, in the Manner, and with the Succeſs, which the Goſpel of this Day relates. Upon each I ſhall make ſome Obſervations, as briefly as conveniently I can. And

1. *Firſt*, Of the Manner of our Lord's proceeding. Which deſerves the more Notice, becauſe ſo very different from his Behaviour to an Inhabitant of the ſame City, a Dependent upon the ſame Court, and in a Caſe of very like Nature. When

Matth. viii. 7. a Centurion, whoſe Servant lay ſick at *Capernaum* too, ſollicited his Help; the Meſſage met with this encouraging Reply, *I will come and heal him.* Accordingly, without the leaſt Delay, our Lord was moving thither; but was ſtopped, by this moſt noble

yet

yet humble Declaration of his Faith, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my Roof, but ſpeak the Word only, and my Servant ſhall be healed.* Luke vii. 6, 7, 8. Now here a Perſon in much more eminent Poſt makes preſſing Application that he would *come and heal his Son.* A Relation, as much dearer, as the Figure of the Courtier was ſuperior to that of the Centurion. And yet we find nothing like the ſame Readineſs, in complying with this Requeſt. Which I mention for this very Purpoſe, that by comparing the Caſes together, it may appear, that our Lord did what we may diſcern to be highly prudent and proper, in each of them.

That Centurion was duly ſenſible, both of our Lord's Power, and of his own Unworthineſs. To Him therefore the kindeſt Advances were made; that thoſe Preventions might furniſh an Opportunity for rendering both his Humility, and his Faith, exemplary and public. The Nobleman here ſeems rather to look for Attendance and Reſpect; and to have thought, that nothing leſs than our Lord's own Preſence could do any Service; nay, and that even this, if not quickly granted, would come too late. This Imperfection of his Faith is expreſſed, in that ſecond Inſtance made, *Ver.* 49. *Sir, come down ere my Child die.* He therefore was to be treated another Way: To be taught, that the Meſſiah is no Reſpecter of Perſons, that the outward State and Dignity is of far leſs Regard with Him, than the inward Diſpoſition and Virtue of the Man: To be convinced, that God is a God afar off as well as near at Hand; and that one ſingle Word, at a Diſtance, ſhould be as effectual to the Patient, as a Sight of him, or a Touch, or any corporal Application whatſoever. Theſe are Inſtructions and Convictions which could not ſo fully have been given, had our Lord complied with the firſt Entreaty, and gone down to the Houſe. And therefore he contrived a Method of more Coldneſs and Reſerve, to make at

once the Miracle appear greater, and the Effect and Benefit of it upon the Aſker, greater and more ſucceſsful too.

That Succeſs I am in the next Place to conſider. By which I mean the Conviction this Miracle wrought upon the Nobleman and his Family, deſcribed at the 53d Verſe; by *himſelf believing and his whole Houſe.*

By his own Believing we are to underſtand, that a Conſideration of the Power and Goodneſs of Chriſt, in raiſing his Son from that languiſhing and hopeleſs Condition, diſpoſed him to attend to his Doctrine, to acknowledge his Divine Authority, and to become his Diſciple upon a reaſonable and full Perſuaſion of the Truth of both. By his *whole Houſe believing* is meant, that he did not content himſelf with theſe Improvements of that Mercy, made ſingly in his own Perſon; but took good Care to propagate all poſſible Effects of this Miracle, and to preſs the natural Conſequences of it, upon as many as his Capacity gave him any Command or Influence over. In both He is and ought to be our Example. For all Deliverances ſhould have the like Operation. We do not, God be bleſſed, need the former Part, of being brought to the Confeſſion of Chriſt and his Goſpel; but alas! we need, but too much, to be quickened and confirmed in the Faith we make Profeſſion of; and to be put upon uſing all our Might, for eſtabliſhing and advancing others in good Principles and Practices. For which the freſh Experiments of God's great Goodneſs to us miniſter very proper Occaſions.

1. Every Deliverance ſhould confirm and quicken our own Faith. For this is often unactive and heavy, and therefore ſhould be invigorated and excited. And often alſo, in Seaſons of Danger and Diſtreſs, 'tis ſubject to great Oppreſſion and Diſcompoſure, by melancholy Miſgivings and dark Thoughts: And upon this Account ſhould be ſtrengthened and ſettled. Now nothing puts into our Hands fitter Opportunities for

both

both theſe Purpoſes, than the Reliefs God is pleaſed to extend to us in our Extremity. Comforting us under Trouble, raiſing us up from Poverty, recovering us from a dangerous Sickneſs, and the like, do undeniably prove and bring this Truth home to our own Feeling, that God is both able and willing to ſave: that no Calamity can be a Match for his Power, nor any Suffering ſo juſtly provoked, as to ſhut out the Greatneſs of his Mercy.

The Inſtance of this Kind, to which I at preſent would confine myſelf, is that of Sickneſs: deſiring to proſecute the Advice I had lately Occaſion to give, for the Behaviour proper upon a Bed of languiſhing, by adding ſomewhat fit to be obſerved, upon the Recovery of our Strength again. *Goſpel* 19 *Sund. after* Trin.

When therefore the Art and Expectation of Man is at a Stand, and the Soul faints away becauſe of the Trouble; if even from the Gate of the Grave, God, by a wonderful kind Providence, reſtores one of his Family and his Friends, to his Eaſe and his Capacity for Buſineſs, to his Comforts and the Aſſemblies of his Saints; Can any more powerful Encouragement be imagined, to rely upon the Almighty's Protection, with an unſhaken Dependance for the future? Will not ſuch a Man's paſt Experience prepare and arm him to encounter the like again, or any other Difficulty that ſhall threaten or aſſault him, with greater Steadineſs and Reſignation of Mind, than can reaſonably be expected from common Men? They too may have heard, and read, and ſeen, and meditated much upon, the Inſtances of God's Power and Goodneſs to others: But all this comes far ſhort of feeling it in their own Caſe. For, the more ſenſible any Demonſtration is to us, the deeper and more durable Impreſſion it ſhould, and naturally will, make. Hence it is, we find the *Iſraelites* ſo often and ſo ſeverely upbraided, becauſe their Infidelity had this peculiar Aggravation, that

God had ſundry Times ſignalized himſelf on their Behalf; and they notwithſtanding upon every new Danger gave themſelves up for loſt, and as much doubted his Aſſiſtance, as if they had never felt it before. And, what indeed can excuſe the Deſpondence of them, who, if they would recollect thoſe Things, which of all others ought not to be forgotten, are able to ſay to their own drooping Spirits; "*Why art thou "ſo full of Heavineſs, O my Soul, and why* Pſal. xliii. 14, 15. "*art thou ſo diſquieted within me? ſtill put* "*thy Truſt in God.* This is not the firſt "Time thou haſt had Cauſe to fear; not the firſt "Adverſity thou haſt been reſcued from; and conſe- "quently, thou canſt have no Reaſon to doubt, but "the ſame mighty Deliverer can, and, if he ſee it "moſt expedient, will turn again, and refreſh thee; "He can take thee out of the Mire and deep Waters, "that thou ſink not; and put a new Song of Praiſe "into thy Mouth, by ſnatching thee out of the Jaws "of this Death alſo."

After this manner are ſuch Inſtances of Service to us, for the Confirming our Faith; but it is neceſſary they ſhould quicken it alſo: That is, they render it more vigorous and exerting, more fruitful in good Works, more zealous in Acts of Piety and Devotion, and every Way more concerned for a Deportment, ſuitable to the Service of a Lord ſo gracious and kind to us. If our Obedience be a Tribute owing to God, as the Author of our Life, and Being, and every Enjoyment to us; then, as oft as that Life is in imminent Danger and called back again from Deſtruction, we are to look upon ourſelves created, as it were, afreſh, and this Obligation is bound faſter, in Proportion as it is repeated upon us. And, which Way ſhall we anſwer it to God, if that Time be not devoted to his Uſe, which he hath granted us a new Term of Years in, when the former was juſt upon the Point of expiring? Eſpecially if we reflect withal, that

that thoſe very Diſeaſes are Chaſtiſements for Sin; and that we have been reſpited from cutting off, for this very Purpoſe, to prove, whether ſuch Corrections have had their intended Effect.

Theſe Things carry ſuch plain Reaſon along with them; that few People are ſo profligate, as not to expreſs this Senſe, and entertain Reſolutions ſuitable to it, while the Rod of God is upon them. How very large and liberal in their Promiſes do the Beds of Sickneſs generally make thoſe that are caſt upon them? And what a mighty Change are we bidden to expect in them, from that very Moment? I wiſh I could not ſay, that ſuch Engagements have loſt much of their Credit too deſervedly, with thoſe, who would be extremely glad, not only to find them true, but to lend their beſt Aſſiſtance towards making them ſo. But alas! no ſooner is the Smart of this Rod over, but the Remembrance of it is commonly over too. Men return to their Health and their Sins together; and prove, that all thoſe vehement Deteſtations came, not from any ſettled Averſion to their Luſts, ſo much as from want of Reliſh and Opportunity to gratify them; or elſe from ſuch Dejection of Animal Spirits, as naturally magnifies our Fears rather than from ſuch ſincere Compunction, as accompanies the Grace of *Repentance not to be repented of.* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Let me therefore moſt earneſtly conjure every Chriſtian, to lay to heart this general Corruption. Think, how diſingenuous, how provoking this Dealing is; how unthankful and treacherous to Almighty God; how cruel and injurious to yourſelves. For, What can be ſuppoſed the End of ſuch Unfaithfulneſs, but that He, who, in Pity to your Unpreparedneſs, for your great Change, and in Condeſcenſion to your Prayers and Vows of living better, hath in Mercy lengthened out your Days; will, at a Time when you are leaſt aware, cut you off in your Sins; and bring

you at laſt to utter and unconceivable Deſtruction both of Body and Soul?

As therefore ye, with *David*, have been ready to cry aloud for Succour, and ſeek God in the *Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of your Souls:* So with him likewiſe it becomes you to be diligent, in preſerving a punctual Remembrance of all that paſs'd between him and you, in that Day of Fear and Sorrow. Not only frequently to think upon, but conſcientiouſly to *pay the Vows, which you promiſed with your Lips, and ſpake with your Mouth, when you were in Trouble.*

Pſal. lxvi. 12.

For be aſſured, in the great Day of Reckoning, theſe will make a very conſiderable Article in every Man's Account. And Wo to them eſpecially, againſt whom the Abuſe of Mercies, ſo earneſtly implored, ſo gladly received, and the Breach of Promiſes ſo ſolemnly made, ſhall then riſe up in Judgment!

2. But *Secondly*, As our own Piety ſhould be carefully promoted upon theſe Occaſions, ſo, to the utmoſt of our Power, ſhould that of others alſo. In order hereunto publick Returns of Thanks, and an humble Approach to the Lord's Supper, are very adviſeable. For, what can be more ſeaſonable than this Sacrament, as it is, by way of Eminence, the Chriſtian Sacrifice of Praiſe; as it is a Mark of our Communion with all the Faithful, to the Public Congregation of whom it hath pleaſed God to reſtore us; and as the beſt Expedient for confirming and repeating our holy Reſolutions, by dedicating to God afreſh thoſe Lives and Perſons, which we have now once again received from his Bounty.

Beſides, we ſhould take all proper Occaſions of recounting with Thankfulneſs the Loving-kindneſs of the Lord, the Benefits we have been loaded with, the Requeſts we have obtained, the Dangers and Miſeries we have eſcaped. For theſe Remembrances will bring a ſenſible Satisfaction to ourſelves, and inſpire Courage and

and Confidence into others, by the Example of our Succeſſes. But eſpecially Care muſt be taken, that ſuch Publications of the Divine Bounty be not empty and formal; but ſuch, as approve their Sincerity by a holy and exemplary Life; without which the loudeſt Praiſes only ſerve to condemn the Speaker of ſo much more Unworthineſs and Hypocriſy. In ſhort, no Endeavours ſhould be wanting, to oblige thoſe under our Command, and to perſuade them that are out of it to ſerve God faithfully and chearfully; to convince them that he never *forſakes his that be godly*; that they *who obey him ſhall want no manner of Thing that is good*; that *they who truſt in him, ſhall not be confounded in the perilous Time*; and they, who do or ſuffer any Thing for his Sake, ſhall in no wiſe loſe the Reward. This is the only Return we are capable of making to God, for the Abundance of his Compaſſion and Love; and it is what he vouchſafes to accept and approve. Let us therefore, with moſt devout and affectionate Hearts, admire, adore, and ſerve him; and account it our greateſt Joy, by Example, Perſuaſion, and every holy Act, to increaſe the Number of his zealous Worſhippers upon Earth now, and of his glorified Saints in Heaven hereafter.

Pſal. xxxvii. 28. --xxxiv. 10. --xxxvii. 19, 41.

The Two and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

LORD, we beſeech thee to keep thy Houſhold the Church in continual Godlineſs, that through thy Protection it may be free from all Adverſities, and devoutly given to ſerve thee in good Works, to the Glory of thy Name, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

1 *Cor.* i. 8. *Phil.* i. 6, 10, 11.

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Phil. i. 3.

3. *I Thank my God upon every Remembrance of you,*

4. *(Always in every Prayer of mine for you all, making Requeſt with Joy)*

5. *For your Fellowſhip in the Goſpel from the firſt Day until now;*

6. *Being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Jeſus Chriſt:*

7. This Concern and good Opinion is due to the Zeal you have ſhewn for the Goſpel, by your Care for me, and ſuffering in the ſame Cauſe with me.

7. *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, becauſe I have you in my Heart, in as much as both in my Bonds, and in the Defence and Confirmation of the Goſpel, ye all are Partakers of my Grace.*

8. I can therefore ſafely call God to witneſs, for the Sincerity and Earneſtneſs of my Affection toward you.

8. *For God is my Record, how greatly I long after you all in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt.*

9. *And this I pray, that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment;*

10. *That ye may approve Things that are excellent; that ye may be ſincere, and without Offence till the Day of Chriſt;*

11. *Being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.*

COMMENT.

THE Manner of St. *Paul*'s expreſſing himſelf here to the *Philippians* bears ſo near a Reſemblance to that to the *Corinthians*, which hath been already conſidered; as renders ſeveral Things then obſerved, very applicable to the preſent Occaſion. But two Particulars there are beſides in the Scripture now before us, which muſt not be paſſed over without Notice taken of them.

See Epiſt. for 18 Sunday.

As *First*, The Nature of that Confidence, which the Apoſtle profeſſes himſelf to have, of their Perſeverance in Goodneſs and Truth. Now this is by no Means that abſolute and undoubted Aſſurance of Salvation, imagined by ſome to be not only poſſible, but fit, nay neceſſary, to be entertained by every faithful Chriſtian: but ſuch as is proportioned to the Arguments on which it ſtands, and accommodated to the Condition of the Perſons whom it concerns.

The firſt and main Foundation of this Confidence is the Mercy and Truth of God: In nothing more conſpicuous, than in his conſtant Readineſs to improve and cheriſh, to increaſe and perfect his own Graces, when not obſtructed by our Abuſe of them. This hath been obſerved in the Place referred to before.

It is a great Confirmation to this Argument, when the Grace and Aſſiſtances vouchſafed by God, appear to have been not beſtowed and received in vain. For, As to entertain no Hopes of People doing well, when they have Abilities and Opportunities put into their Hands, would be, even before Trial, highly uncharitable: So not to have good Confidence of their continuing to do well, after plain Proof and Experience of their having done ſo hitherto, would be manifeſtly unjuſt. And this was the Caſe of theſe *Philippians*. The Improvements they had made, from their firſt Converſion to the Faith; the zealous Concern they had expreſſed for this Apoſtle by whoſe Miniſtry they had been converted; and not only the Regard they bore to his Sufferings, but the Conſtancy and Firmneſs of Mind ſo conſpicuous in their own, for the ſame common Cauſe of Chriſtianity, were noble Evidences of their good Principles and Reſolutions. Such as, joined with that Bounty of God, which *gives to them that have*, were a very juſt Ground of the *Confidence*, mentioned in this Place. A Confidence, which could not have riſen ſo high upon a mere Judgment of Charity. Nor is it built

Ver. 29, 30.

built upon any Notions of an abſolute and arbitrary Proceeding, abſtracted from the Circumſtances and Character of the Parties concerned. Nor is it ſuch, as forgets, that thoſe Parties are ſtill Men, and yet in a State of Hazard and Trial; for theſe very Perſons are exhorted, in the next Chapter, to *work out this Salvation with Fear and Trembling*. And upon all theſe Accounts, from this Confidence in St. *Paul* concerning his Converts, we ſhall do well to take a Standard of the Confidence, which every good Man is allowed to entertain concerning himſelf. It muſt be ſuch as reſults from a careful Examination of his own State; and is ſo adjuſted, as to riſe in the ſame Degrees, with his Advancement in Piety and Virtue. In a Word, A Confidence, not totally excluſive of Fear; but ſo due a Temperament of both; that the One ſhall never degenerate into Security and Preſumption, nor the Other ſink into Inactivity and Deſpair.

Chap. ii. 12.

Secondly, It is very obſervable, that the Increaſe of *Knowledge* and *Judgment*, which the Apoſtle here begs of God in behalf of theſe *Philippians*, is mentioned, as a Conſequence of their *Love*. The Benefit of this *Judgment* is to *approve the Things that are excellent*; or, (as the Original may very well import) to make a right and juſt Diſtinction, in the different Nature and Conſequences of Things: And, in purſuance of that, to chooſe and ſtick by thoſe, which are truly profitable and good. The Ability to do this is certainly a proper Subject for a Prayer: There being no Inſtance, wherein the Grace of God ſeems more needful, than the keeping us clear of thoſe Partialities, and Prejudices, and worldly Intereſts, which are ſo apt to warp us in Matters relating to our Duty. And this Grace God hath promiſed to conduct them by, who ſincerely ſtudy to ſerve and pleaſe Him. So that, as one Sort and Degree of Knowledge is antecedent to Practice, there is another (the increaſe and the abounding) conſequent to it. Conſequent in the Nature

Ver. 9.

Nature of the Thing; in regard a holy Life delivers us from many Obſtructions which blind and corrupt our Judgment; and conſequent, by virtue of thoſe many Promiſes of the more eſpecial Guidance of the Holy Spirit. All which our Saviour in effect compriſes in that one, that *If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* This is the likelieſt Way to ſecure us againſt all Error in Matters of Religion; but it is a certain Way of ſecuring us from all Errors that are dangerous and deſtructive. We ſhall at leaſt not fail to know enough for our Purpoſe; and ſo much, as may preſerve us *ſincere, and without Offence, until the Day of Chriſt.* John vii. 17. Ver. 10.

The Two and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. xviii. 21.

21. *PEter ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, how oft ſhall my Brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? till ſeven Times?*

PARAPHRASE.

21. From the Directions given before, concerning Offences of publick Scandal, St. *Peter* took Occaſion to enquire, what Behaviour is neceſſary, in caſe of Injuries that are private, and ſuch as, even after Pardon and Promiſes of Amendment, are frequently repeated. *See* Luke xvii. 4.

22. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven Times: but, until ſeventy Times ſeven.*

23. *Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain King, which would take Account of his Servants.*

23. The Meaſures by which God will proceed with Men under the Goſpel, may be underſtood by this following Parable of a King, *&c.*

24. *And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thouſand Talents.*

25. *But foraſmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be ſold, and his Wife and Children, and all that he had, and Payment to be made.*

25. His Lord determined to take the Extremity of the Law upon the inſolvent Debtor.

26. *The Servant therefore fell down, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

27. So good was this Lord, as to exceed the Servant's Requeſt, and not only forbear, but forgive the Debtor.

27. *Then the Lord of that Servant was moved with Compaſſion, and looſed him, and forgave him the Debt.*

28. *But the ſame Servant went out, and found one of his fellow Servants which owed him an hundred Pence: and he laid Hands on him, and took him by the Throat, ſaying, Pay me that thou oweſt.*

29. *And his fellow Servant fell down at his Feet, and beſought him, ſaying, Have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

30. *And he would not; but went and caſt him into Priſon, till he ſhould pay the Debt.*

31. *So when his fellow Servants ſaw what was done, they were very ſorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done.*

32. *Then his Lord, after that he had called him, ſaid unto him, O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that Debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me:*

33. *Shouldſt not thou alſo have had Compaſſion on thy fellow Servant, even as I had Pity on thee?*

34. His Lord, full of Indignation at ſuch unworthy Treatment, retracted this intended Pardon, and executed the Severity of the Law upon this Wretch, which he had done upon his fellow Servant.

34. *And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the Tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him.*

35. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Treſpaſſes.*

COMMENT.

THE Deſign of this Parable, whereof the Goſpel for the Day conſiſts, is ſufficiently clear; both from St. *Peter*'s Queſtion, which gave Occaſion to it; and from our Lord's Ap-

Ver. 21.

plication

plication in the End, which declares the Uſe he would have us make of it. Upon that therefore I ſhall principally inſiſt. But would, before I come to fix there, briefly recommend ſome few Obſervations, which our Lord's Manner and Expreſſions, in the circumſtantial Parts of the Parable, ſeem very naturally to ſuggeſt to us.

1. The *Firſt* Thing I obſerve is, The great Propriety of that Compariſon, which repreſents our Sins under the Notion of Debts. For no Man ſurely needs be told, that by the King here is meant Almighty God; by reckoning with his Servants, the bringing Men to Account for their Actions and Behaviour in his Service: By the *Ten thouſand Talents* due to that King, the grievous, the numberleſs Offences againſt God, with which every Servant of his ſtands charged: And, by the *hundred Pence* owing from one Servant to anther, the Injuries and Affronts, and every Sort of Provocation, which paſſes between Man and Man. Conſequently, the Barbarity of the ungrateful Servant will anſwer to our bearing Malice and taking Revenge, when ſuch Provocations are given: And that Servant being at laſt delivered to the Tormenters imports the heavy Condemnation, which ſpiteful and mercileſs Men incur: Heavy indeed, when their own Meaſure comes to be meted back to them, in the great Day of Account; and they, who would not forgive by God's Example, ſhall periſh by their own. Such is the plain Analogy of the Parable. All turns upon this Ground, that every Man is obliged to ſatisfy the Law; that, where that Law hath been tranſgreſſed, it acquires a Right of demanding, and a Power of inflicting, ſuch Penalties, as the Wiſdom of the Enactor hath preſcribed in ſuch Caſes. And therefore, as puniſhing the Sinner is exacting the Debt: So remitting the Debt is a Releaſe, and quitting all Claim to Revenge, and affording to the Perſon faulty all Inſtances of Humanity, and Peace, and Chriſtian Charity, as if ſuch Debt had

had never been contracted, that is, as if ſuch Fault had never been committed at all.

2. We ſhall do well, in the next Place, to take this otherwiſe wicked Servant as our Pattern, in the Earneſtneſs of that ſubmiſſive Application for Mercy and Forbearance, (*Ver.* 26.) Thus, when our Conſciences ſmite us for our Guilt, (the Reproaches whereof may reaſonably be allowed for the Lord's *beginning to reckon with us*, (*Ver.* 24.) the proper Courſe to quiet our Fears, is a due Acknowledgment how juſt thoſe Fears are. In this Senſe we ſhould betake ourſelves to God; and, with all poſſible Humility and Reverence, own the Greatneſs of the Debt; deprecate the heavy Diſpleaſure we have deſerved; and ſincerely promiſe our utmoſt Care to make Amends hereafter, for that improvident and undutiful Courſe of Life, which hath already brought us ſo deeply in Arrear. Thus far the Servant acted as became him, that he did not diſpute any Article in the Account; nor preſume to juſtify himſelf, in Bar to the Severity of that Sentence pronounced againſt him: But he caſt all at his Lord's Feet, and repoſed his Hope entirely in his Goodneſs and Compaſſion.

3. The Greatneſs of which is a *Third*, and ſurely a moſt comfortable Conſideration, preſented to our Thoughts by this Parable in a very extraordinary Manner. Other Scriptures content themſelves with ſuch Deſcriptions of the Divine Mercy, as, that God will abate of the Puniſhments we have incurred, by not

Pſal. ciii. 10. *dealing with us after our Sins, nor rewarding us according to our Wickedneſs:* By helping the Miſerable, forbearing the Sinner, and forgiving the Penitent, when they cry unto him: But the Paſſage before us, is an Inſtance of his granting a great deal more than was deſired. Patience and Time for Payment was the whole Subject of this Debtor's Petition; but a total Releaſe, and generous Diſcharge, were the Conſequence and Effect of it. So abundantly does

does this Lord, plenteous in Goodneſs and Compaſſion, do, even for his once ungracious Servants, above what *they aſk or think:* More, than they have the Confidence to expect, more than they have the Power to imagine it poſſible they ſhould ever obtain. But all this Goodneſs ſtill proceeds upon Conditions; and preſuppoſes a Frame of Mind ſenſible of, and thankful for, it. Namely, a Readineſs to expreſs that Senſe and Gratitude by the like Condeſcenſion and Forgiveneſs, ſo often as Occaſions call for them, and ſo far as Differences of Circumſtances admit the Practice of them. This is the main Point, to which the whole Parable tends: Pardoning of Injuries done to us by our Brethren; and that, enforced upon theſe weighty Conſiderations, of ſtanding in need ourſelves to be forgiven: And of being ſure to forfeit, in our own Caſe, from an offended God, that Mercy, which we refuſe to thoſe who have offended us. Here it is fit I ſhould, becauſe 'tis evident that our Lord does, principally fix. The Strength of whoſe Argument it ſhall be my Endeavour to explain; not by diſcourſing upon the Duty of Forgiveneſs at large; but by inſiſting upon ſome Particulars, more eſpecially remarkable in the Paſſage now before us. To this Purpoſe I deſign to repreſent the peculiar Manner,

I. *Firſt*, Of our Lord's expreſſing this Duty.

II. *Secondly*, Of his deſcribing our Danger in not diſcharging it. And,

III. *Thirdly*, Of his illuſtrating our mighty Obligation to it.

1. Of the Duty itſelf it is remarkable, *Firſt*, That our Lord hath in this Place choſen to expreſs it, by *forgiving* from the Heart, *every one his Brother their Treſpaſſes.* It hath been already obſerved, That this Forgiveneſs is equivalent to the quitting of a Debt, or wiping out of a Score. And the Words now under Conſideration imply, That the holding our Hands from any Act of Revenge, or a carrying it fair outwardly, will not ſuffice; unleſs our moſt ſecret Reſent-

ments

ments of Anger be so far quieted, as to stifle all such Remembrance of the Wrongs we have sustained, as may abate of our Charity to the Doer of them. This is the Forgiveness we desire at God's Hand; that our past Provocations may be no Bar to his future Bounty and Love. And consequently this is that, which we are bound to exercise towards Men; a forgetting all they have done amiss so far, that the good Wishes and good Offices, fit for our Condition and theirs, shall not be obstructed, by recollecting such Offences to their Disadvantage.

I am well aware, how hard Flesh and Blood is to be brought to such a Temper; and what Pretences are used to make this appear an impracticable Virtue; destructive of our own Safety, and evacuating all the Methods, which the Wisdom of every Society hath found it necessary to provide, for guarding its Members against, or helping them to redress from, the Injuries and Insults of malicious wicked People. And therefore, to set the Matter in its true Light, and effectually to deliver it, if possible, from the Ignorance of the mistaken, and the Sophistry of the designing Objectors against this Duty; I would propose, that the following Cautions may be seriously attended to.

1. That the Subject I am now upon, regards private Injuries, and private Revenge; but hath little or nothing to do with that Punishment and Vengeance, which Persons in publick Authority are, by their Office, obliged to inflict upon Offenders.

2. That Christians are not hereby forbidden, absolutely and upon all Occasions, to right themselves by legal Process. It may indeed, and sometimes does happen, that on the contrary they are bound to endeavour this, for the Chastisement of Offenders, the Terror of ill Men, and the Security of Order and Peace. For, where the publick Interest is concerned, we are not at full Liberty to put up Injuries. 'Tis Mercy many Times to depart from our own; but it were Injustice many Times

Times to give up more than our own. And accordingly he, who in this Parable commands every one to forgive, is not at all inconſiſtent with himſelf, who had but juſt before commanded his Diſciples, in ſome Circumſtances to *tell the Church*; and, if that did no good, to let the Tranſgreſſor be *unto* them *as a Heathen Man, and a Publican.* Ver. 17.

3. But thus far we certainly are bound, even with regard to ſuch Caſes; not to contend or give Trouble for ſmall Matters; nor to be vexatious and ſpightful in any. To demean ourſelves with that Temper and Moderation, which become Men ſeeking Juſtice, and Common Good, and the reclaiming of Diſorderly People; not private Revenge, or the Harm and Suffering of the Party. In ſhort, to uſe no unfair Means for getting our Adverſaries at our Mercy; and to treat them with Humanity and Tenderneſs, when we have them at our Mercy.

4. It ſhould be remembered, that Chriſtian Charity does not exclude Chriſtian Prudence. And therefore this Parable, which obliges us to forgive thoſe, who have wronged, affronted, or abuſed us; does not oblige us to continue the ſame Dealings, or the ſame Familiarities, as if they had conſtantly approved themſelves faithful, and made proper Returns for our former Kindneſs. We muſt refuſe them nothing to which they have a Right, under the Character of Men or of Chriſtians. But we are by no Means tied to lay ourſelves open to freſh Injuries; to let them into our Secrets or Concerns; to chooſe them for our Agents, or our Adviſers, our moſt particular Confidents, or deareſt Favourites and Friends.

5. Once more; this Parable ſuppoſes the Offender to be ſorry for what is paſt, to have made Submiſſion, and heartily to deſire Forgiveneſs. And, though his Obſtinacy will not excuſe our Rancour and Uncharitableneſs; yet will it juſtify ſuch a prudent Coldneſs and Diſtance, as may be of Uſe to make him ſenſible

of his Fault. But when he ſees, and ſincerely repents of it; then we are to meet him half Way, and receive him with open Arms: And every freſh Proof of his Remorſe, and Amendment, muſt engage ſuitable Proofs of our entire Reconciliation.

Whatever a Chriſtian is allowed to alledge againſt forgiving Enemies and Injuries, will fall, if I miſtake not, under theſe Limitations. And all without that Compaſs, can be of no great Weight for diſpenſing with this Duty. The Neglect whereof involves us in a Danger, the very particular Manner of repreſenting which to us is the

II. *Second* Thing I propoſed to conſider. Now ſeveral other Scriptures cut off all Hopes of being forgiven by God from them who refuſe to forgive their Brethren. But thoſe Words, *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you*, refer us to the King's Procedure in the Parable, as the Meaſure and Pattern of God's Dealing with us; ſo that this Application ſeems to carry the Point higher, than any other Paſſage relating to this Matter. For this I conceive to be a very remarkable Circumſtance, that the Servant's Debt is, in the Parable, repreſented as actually remitted; and yet, upon denying the like Grace to his Fellow-Servant, that Favour is retracted, and he is *delivered over to the Tormentors*, as if the Debt had never been releaſed. Now the *Gifts of God are* ſaid to be *without Repentance:* And it is manifeſtly one Thing not to grant a Pardon, and another, to withdraw it again, when granted. This is a Difficulty, in the Application of the Parable, for reconciling which to our Notions of the Juſtice and Unchangeableneſs of Almighty God, we ſhall do well to take the following Particulars along with us.

Ver. 27.

Ver. 34.

Rom. xi. 29.

1. In regard Eternal Death and Torture are in Strictneſs the deſerved *Wages* of every wilful Sin; God may juſtly inflict this Puniſhment, on a Sin ſo heinous

as

as Uncharitableneſs. And according to this Conſtruction, here is no Need of Retroſpect. For thus the unrelenting Servant ſuffers not for his former Crimes, but for the laſt of Hardheartedneſs only. This, in the Language of the Parable, is a Debt. A Debt incapable of being ſatisfied by the Contractor; and contracted afreſh, ſince the Releaſe of the old one. Conſider,

2. That it is agreeable to all the Meaſures of Juſtice and Equity, to puniſh thoſe Criminals more ſeverely, who have abuſed the Mercy of the Government, extended to them formerly. And ſo this Servant, and all whom he reſembles, may be ſaid indirectly, to ſuffer for former Facts; as ſome new Fact excludes them from that Mercy, which this would certainly find, had they not continued inſenſible, and unreformed by that Grace, of which they ſo largely taſted, when Guilty and Obnoxious heretofore. For Governors muſt vindicate the Honour of Law and Juſtice; and Patience, when perverted to ill Purpoſes, naturally turns into Rigour. But then the Pardon is not, in this Caſe, properly revoked; rather, by producing no Fruits of Amendment, it becomes accidentally an Occaſion of Anger more fierce, and Vengeance inexorable.

3. This manner of Proceeding may be an Intimation, that the Pardon of Sin, like all other Spiritual Bleſſings, is but imperfect and ſuſpended upon Conditions, during our Continuance in the preſent World. That we now have it, as Divines ſometimes ſpeak, in *Inchoation* only: But are to wait for our full and final Abſolution, in the Sentence of God's great Day. Now theſe Beginnings, and the preſent Comforts of them, are ſuch, as keep us ſtill upon our good Behaviour. They may be forfeited and loſt by Relapſes into Vice; they proceed and are confirmed, upon a Suppoſal of our Converſion and Perſeverance; but Wickedneſs, not forſaken, cancels the Act of Grace,

and brings all our old Guilt back upon us again. Nor is this any Reflection upon the Truth and Conſtancy of God, in regard the Change is not in Him, but in our Selves: And ſo, as St. *Chryſoſtom* in the preſent Caſe expreſſes it, the King did not falſify, but the inhuman Servant defeated, his own Grant of Mercy.

Some, or all theſe Ways (eſpecially allowing for the figurative Stile of Parables) will abundantly ſuffice to reſolve the Difficulty before us. But, which of them ſoever we take, the Neceſſity of forgiving others is exceeding clear and ſtrong. For every Way we have an Experiment in View, not only of a Bar put to Mercy for the future, but of Mercy, paſt and already received, rendered ineffectual; nay turning to the Party's greater Condemnation, by refuſing to diſcharge this Duty. All which is yet more powerfully enforced by the *Third* Obſervation I propoſed, *viz.*

III. The manner of illuſtrating our mighty Obligation to it. Which is done, by comparing the two Caſes together, and ſo ſhewing the Diſparity between them. Now that Diſparity conſiſts chiefly in Three Things: The Parties concerned, the Quality of the Debt, and the Ability of making Satisfaction. Theſe are Differences, each of them deſerving our moſt attentive Conſideration.

1. For that of the Parties, *Firſt*, Our Sins againſt God are a *Debt* to a *King*, a *Treſpaſs* upon a *Father*; thoſe of Men againſt us are between Servant and Fellow-Servant, Brother and Brother. One known Aggravation of any Fault is eſtimated by the Quality of the Perſon offended. And the Capacities which God is here repreſented under, are ſuch as do, above all others, render Sinners in this Reſpect inexcuſable. His Dignity and Diſtance above us, his Authority and Dominion over us, are implied in the Character of a King: His boundleſs Affection, and Goodneſs, and tender Care for us, under that of a Father. The former

former convicts us of moſt inſolent Rebellion; the latter, of the baſeſt and moſt unnatural Ingratitude. And how hardened is that Face, which betrays not the utmoſt Confuſion, for Diſobedience toward ſuch Relations, even among Men? But what are the beſt of Fathers, what the mightieſt of Kings upon Earth, compared to our moſt gracious, moſt glorious One in Heaven? And conſequently, what Compariſon can there be, between our Offences committed againſt God; and thoſe, by which any one Man can have provoked any other Man? How near to a Level muſt they needs ſtand, who are both taken out of the ſame Clay, both framed by the ſame Potter, both caſt in the ſame Mould, both Servants in the ſame Family, though the Rank and Poſt they both hold in it be not exactly alike? How ſmall and inconſiderable is any Difference, in the Power of a few Circumſtances to make, where all the eſſential Parts and Privileges are perfectly alike? Weigh then this Diſproportion well, and then tell me, O Man, with what Face thou canſt go to Extremities with one ſo much thy Equal; when thy own Conſcience accuſes thee daily; and flies for Pardon to One, in every Reſpect, infinitely thy Superior? But, if this Conſideration cannot diſarm thy Paſſion, the *Next*, I perſuade myſelf, will not fail to put it quite out of Countenance. Which is

2. *Secondly*, The Quality of the Debt itſelf; figured by Sums ſo diſtant, as that of our Offences againſt God, amounting to *Ten thouſand Talents*; thoſe of our Brethren againſt Us, riſing no higher than a *Hundred Pence*. They, who take the Pains to compute theſe two Sums, will, I think, find the Diſproportion between them, to be much about Six hundred Thouſand to One. Nor may we imagine the Compariſon to ſtand good, only in the Caſe of very notorious and profligate Sinners on the one Hand, and of the ſlighteſt Injuries on the other: But every Man, even the moſt circumſpect, owes his *Ten thouſand Talents* to God;

and no Man, even the moſt unworthily treated, hath more than a *Hundred Pence* to demand of his Brother. For how poor is the Damage ſuſtained by one or a few Inſtances of Enmity or Injuſtice, done to us; if ſet againſt the various, the frequent, the continual Provocations, daily and hourly given by us to God? How ſmall is the greateſt Clemency of the meekeſt and beſt-natured Man alive, if compared to thoſe boundleſs Overflowings of Mercy, extended by Him to ſorrowful and returning Sinners? But eſpecially, How unworthy is any Sinner of that Mercy, who refuſes to remit a Debt ſo trivial, that, if himſelf be not forgiven Six hundred Thouſand Times as much, he muſt be ruined and undone for ever: Nay, who is already forewarned, that forgiven he cannot be that vaſtly great, without remitting freely this very ſmall, Demand? To all which we have yet a

3. *Third* Difference to add, with regard to the Ability of theſe ſeveral Debtors. What we have offended God in, we are in no Condition to make Satisfaction for; but for all, that Men have done amiſs to us, we may receive large and ſufficient Reparation. This Remark likewiſe the Parable ſuggeſts, by affirming,

Ver. 25. that *the Servant had not* wherewithal *to pay* his Lord. His aſking *Patience* therefore, and promiſing full Payment, was but the Artifice of Common Debtors; who, to gain Time and Quiet, make no Scruple to engage for ſuch Things as they are altogether unable to make good. But now, by

Ver. 28—30. no ſuch Intimation being left us of the Fellow-Servant, we may reaſonably preſume, that his *Hundred Pence* might, and would have been eaſily compaſſed, with a little forbearing and gentle Uſage.

Thus it is like in the Application. Many Offences the very Perſons offending may make us good Amends for; many the Laws will right us in; and thoſe, in which neither of theſe Ways can help us to Reſtitution,

tion, God hath a thouſand Methods in Reſerve, and will not fail, to do us Juſtice for. An Eſtate, wreſted out of our Hands by Oppreſſion or Fraud, may be drawn back again with Advantage: A malicious Slander may blow over; and be ſo effectually confuted, as even to eſtabliſh and raiſe our Reputation: But, if neither of theſe happen, ſtill ſuch are only temporal and tranſitory Loſſes. Men may impoveriſh us here; but they cannot take from us that Treaſure in Heaven, upon which alone our Hearts ought to be fixed. They may ſpeak and think amiſs of us; but bleſſed be God, it is not theirs, but his Sentence, that we are to ſtand and fall by; and his Judgment, we are ſure, will be according to Truth and Righteouſneſs. Nay, put the laſt and worſt Effect of Malice, that it kill our Body; yet can it not touch our Soul, nor finally deſtroy that very Body, nor rob us of one Jewel in that Crown, which when Outrage and Envy help to procure, they become even a Kindneſs and Advantage to us. And thus we know it is, that *all Things* are ſure to *work together for good to them that love God:* That, the more grievous ſuch Mens Sufferings, the more injurious, the more meekly endured, the more charitably paſſed over, they have been; by ſo much the brighter, the more maſſive, is that Eternal Glory they work out. Rom. viii. 28.

But though Men may ſometimes, and God can and will always make us amends; yet we are not in a Capacity of making him any. All the Payment he can receive for this vaſt Debt on our Part, is of his own. For we have nothing, and we are nothing; and therefore, knowing that we had not to pay, this gracious Lord hath provided himſelf a Lamb, of more Value than Millions of Millions of us. A Lamb, whoſe Blood he therefore accepts in full Satisfaction, for the Debts and Treſpaſſes of a whole World of Sinners.

So ſtrong is this Duty bound upon us, by a Compariſon of the two Caſes, as well as by the Arguments

inſiſted on before. To Men diſpaſſionate and unprejudiced theſe Reaſons will be ſufficient: To them that are not, nothing will be ſo. I conclude my Diſcourſe therefore with an excellent Paſſage out of the Son of *Sirach*, than which I can think of none more pertinent to the Goſpel for this Day: *He that revengeth ſhall find Vengeance from the Lord, and he will ſurely keep his Sins in remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the Hurt that he hath done unto thee, ſo ſhall thy Sins alſo be forgiven, when thou prayeſt. One Man beareth Hatred againſt another, and doth he ſeek Pardon from the Lord? He ſheweth no Mercy to a Man, which is like himſelf: and doth he aſk Forgiveneſs of his own Sins? If he that is but Fleſh nouriſh Hatred, who will intreat for Pardon of his Sins? Remember the Commandments, and bear no Malice to thy Neighbour: Remember the Covenant of the Higheſt, and wink at Ignorance.*

Eccluſ. xxviii. 1, &c.

The Three and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

John xv. 1—5. *Mark* xi. 24.

O God, our Refuge and Strength, who art the Author of all Godlineſs; be ready, we beſeech thee, to hear the devout Prayers of thy Church; and grant, that thoſe Things which we aſk faithfully, we may obtain effectually, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

17. Let your Behaviour, (with regard to the Matter in Controverſy about the *Jewiſh* Law, and in all other Points) be conformable to mine, and to theirs who act as I do.

Phil. iii. 17.

17. *BRethren, be Followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an Enſample,*

(18. *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt:*

18. And be not ſeduced by them, who (with great Sorrow I ſpeak it) are, by their Zeal for the Law, Enemies to Chriſt crucified: partly by refuſing to ſuffer for his Sake, and partly by advancing the Legal Rites, and ſo not aſcribing their Salvation to his Death alone, but inſiſting upon the Obſervance of thoſe, as neceſſary to it.

19. *Whoſe End is Deſtruction, whoſe God is their Belly: and whoſe Glory is in their Shame, who mind earthly Things.*)

19. Such Men God will deſtroy, they will periſh in their Sins; they devote themſelves wholly to Luxury and Luſt; they take a Pride in the Practices, that are really a Reproach to them; and ſet their Hearts upon the Profits and Pleaſures of this World only.

20. *For our Converſation is in Heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:*

21. *Who ſhall change our vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all Things unto himſelf.*

20, 21. But good Chriſtians look farther. They conſider, that they are Denizens of Heaven, that their main Intereſt lies there; and therefore they live as Men whoſe Minds are already there. And Reaſon good, ſince their Saviour and Head, who is already there, is aſſuredly expected by them, to come, and to transform theſe frail and mortal Bodies to the Likeneſs of his own glorified Body. An aſtoniſhing Change indeed, but ſuch as ought not to exceed our Belief; when we conſider, that the Perſon undertaking for it, is omnipotent, and conſequently able to effect this or any other Thing that he ſees fit.

COMMENT.

BY propounding his own Practice to theſe *Philippians* as a Pattern for their Imitation, the Apoſtle hath at once intimated to us the Duty, both of all, who are intruſted with the Miniſtry of the Goſpel to ſet, and of all who live under their Miniſtry to follow, ſuch Examples, as may expreſs and adorn the Chriſtian Religion. The mighty Uſefulneſs and happy Influence whereof ſhould here have been illuſtrated, as Inducements ſo to do; had not a former Occaſion led me, (though briefly yet I hope ſufficiently) to repreſent both the Beauty, and the Force, of ſuch Motives to Piety and Virtue.

Ver. 17.

Epiſt. 3 Sund. *in* Lent. Vol. II. p. 367.

The great Neceſſity of ſuch Examples, and of a careful Conformity to them, is, in the next Place, urged from the Multitudes of thoſe, who brought a Scandal upon, and acted manifeſtly againſt, the Intereſts of the Chriſtian Religion. This teaches Men to depend upon the Death of Jeſus, as the only ſufficient and meritorious Cauſe of Salvation; and preſcribes Faith in him, as the Means and Condition of attaining the Benefits purchaſed by that Death. But ſeveral who had embraced the Goſpel, retained an intemperate and unſeaſonable Zeal for the Moſaick Inſtitution; and, holding the Obſervance of thoſe Rites ſtill neceſſary, repreſented the Death of Chriſt, as a partial and imperfect Cauſe of Salvation. This was a Derogation, which, from whatever Principle it proceeded, might very juſtly denominate the Aſſertors of it *Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt.* But it had this yet higher Aggravation, of being a time-ſerving Principle; taken up for Eaſe and Convenience, to procure Favour with the Jews, and prevent any Perſecutions from that Quarter. Nor only ſo; but the Advancers of it were as averſe to any Mortification of their corrupt Appetites, as they could be to bodily Sufferings for the Truth. They would neither die for it, nor live up to it: Profit and Pleaſure, Fleſh and Senſe, had the whole of their Thoughts and Affections. And this was a Temper and Converſation, ſo contrary to that Purity, that Abſtractedneſs from the World, that ſeeking the Whole of their Happineſs in a future State, to which both the Example and the Doctrine of our Bleſſed Saviour oblige all his Diſciples; that they might well be called Enemies to Chriſt, who refuſe thus to *follow him:* And to that *Croſs*, which, in either of the Senſes juſt now mentioned, they would not be prevailed upon to *take up, and follow him.*

Luke ix. 9, 23.

The Circumſtances of Religion are indeed very different now, from what they were then. But can it be ſaid, that the Lives of its Profeſſors are ſo? Do not Multitudes

Multitudes of them, who call themſelves Chriſtians, betray the like ſenſual and worldly Mind in the preſent Age? Do they not employ the chief of their Care, in making Proviſion for all the Softneſſes of Luxury and Luſt; and, by a moſt diſſolute and even filthy Converſation, make *their Belly their God, and glory in their Shame?* Do they not lay out their Love and their Deſires, their Time and their Pains, in the Advantages and Delights of this preſent mortal State; and, by a wretched Negligence and Stupidity, ſet up their Reſt, and place their Happineſs, on this Side the Grave; without any Signs of Regard to thoſe Hopes and Promiſes, which teach them to expect and ſeek it in a future and diſtant State? Is not this, in the ſtricteſt Senſe of the Apoſtle's Words, *to mind earthly Things*, while in Truth they mind no other but theſe? If then that prepoſterous and abſurd Behaviour drew Tears from St. *Paul*; how can we ſee, and not moſt heartily bewail, the Scandal brought upon the beſt of Doctrines, the monſtrous Inconſiſtence between the Diſpoſition of ſuch Believers, and the true Spirit of that Goſpel, pretended to be made the Rule of their Faith and Manners; how ſhall we bear to reflect upon the unſpeakable Danger and Miſery of infinite Souls, *whoſe End* muſt be *Deſtruction*, in deſpight of all the Methods of Grace deſigned to ſave them from it? This is an Occaſion, which calls for our Compaſſion more than any Sufferings in Perſon or in Fortune, which extend to this Life only. And ſuch, with regard to our own Preſervation, ought to engage our Care, not to be led away by the Examples of thoſe Many, who live in Contradiction to the Goſpel; but to frame our Temper and Behaviour, upon the Model of thoſe few and better Men, who have rightly conſidered the Obligations they are under, and the Privileges they are intitled to, and to demean themſelves accordingly. And this is the Importance of the Words next following, *For our Converſation is in Heaven.*

The

The Word, which here is rendered *Converſation*, ſignifies *Citizenſhip*, and alludes to the Practice frequent with the *Romans* in particular; whereby not only private Perſons, but whole Cities and Provinces, were admitted to certain Rights and Immunities, peculiar to that Commonwealth and Conſtitution; though they were neither born in, nor Inhabitants of, the City of *Rome*. Theſe were ſometimes beſtowed freely as a Mark of Friendſhip and Favour; ſometimes purchaſed at a conſiderable Price; ſometimes inherited by Deſcent. But, which Way ſoever conveyed, the Poſſeſſion of them was eſteemed a very valuable Advantage. That Privilege St. *Paul* alledges, in bar to his being ſcourged; and, when the Captain replied, that himſelf had *purchaſed this Freedom with a great Sum*, anſwers, that he, as a Native of *Tarſus*, was *free-born*. But then, as this Freedom conferred ſome Privileges, ſo did it likewiſe introduce ſome Engagements of Subjection to, and Compliance with, the Laws and Cuſtoms of that Commonwealth, whereof the Perſons were free. All this was perfectly well underſtood by the Inhabitants of *Philippi*, which was itſelf a *Colony* of *Rome*, though ſituate in *Macedonia*; and where the main Accuſation brought againſt the Apoſtles, was, that they *taught Cuſtoms, not lawful for the* Citizens of that Place *to receive, neither to obſerve*, upon the Account of their *being Romans*. An Argument ſo popular, from the general Apprehenſion of forfeiting that Privilege, by admitting any Principles contrary to the Terms upon which it was held; that we find the People of all Conditions immediately taking fire, and diſcharging their Fury upon the ſuppoſed Inſtruments of ſo great a Damage and Danger to their Community. And again, when the Indignities ſuffered upon this Account, were complained of by St. *Paul*, as an Infringement of that Right, which he had equal Claim to, as a Denizen

Acts xxii. 25, 27, 28.

Acts xvi. 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 37—39.

a Denizen of *Rome*; we find the Magiſtrates themſelves making a Submiſſion for the Extreams they had been carried into, by an unlawful Breach of this Privilege in one reſpect, from too haſty a Zeal to aſſert the Obligations of it in another.

From hence the Propriety of this Expreſſion, to the *Philippians* in particular, is very obvious and evident; and ſo is the Application of it to Chriſtians in general. We all, like them, belong to a City, at Diſtance from which it is our Lot at preſent to dwell. But ſtill we are incorporated there; and, by Virtue of that Incorporation, lay Claim to ſeveral valuable Rights, which otherwiſe in no Degree belong to us. This is our *continuing City, a City that hath Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God:* Heb. xi. 10. And all our Hopes of a bleſſed Immortality depend upon our being Members of it. How highly then ought we to eſteem, how thankful ought we to ſhew ourſelves for, the Benefits, which this Relation and Capacity entitles us to? How ought our Eyes, our Souls, our every Faculty, to be fixed upon them; how continually our Thoughts, our Strength, our Time, be employed in the Purſuit of them? How very vigilant and careful ſhould we be, not to diſhonour our Character, or become guilty of any Thing that may forfeit thoſe Rights? A Character which they have quite forgot, who made any Thing ſhort of Heaven, the End of their Actions, and the Subſtance of their Happineſs. A Forfeiture, which they certainly incur, who live by Senſe; and to the Gratification of thoſe corrupt Appetites, which are allowed no Place there. For the Laws and Manners of that heavenly City are in Force upon us already. And, though we cannot in all Points live as the bleſſed Inhabitants there do, till we come to live where they do; yet we are bound to aſpire after as great a Reſemblance to their Purity, as our preſent Condition will admit; and it is by living here like them, that we muſt be made meet hereafter to live with them.

As therefore they are happy beyond all Imagination, in the Fruition of and nearer Approach to God: So ſhould we, by devout Prayers and pious Meditations, delightfully converſe with him; contemplate the Glory of his Majeſty, the Beauties of his Works, the Wiſdom of his Providence, the Wonders of his Mercy and Goodneſs, and eſpecially that noble Inſtance and Illuſtration of it, the Redemption of loſt Mankind by the Death of his dear Son. As they are ſet above the Vanities and Changes of this World, by the preſent Enjoyment of a Bliſs unſpeakable and eternal: So ſhould the Proſpect of that Bliſs raiſe our Hearts above the preſent World, inſpire a generous Diſdain of all the unſincere Pleaſures and ſhort uncertain Advantages here below, lighten all our Afflictions, moderate all our Paſſions, and reconcile us to the Apprehenſions and Approaches of that Diſſolution, which in Death lays the Seeds of an endleſs Life. As they are all united in the moſt perfect Agreement and tendereſt Love: So ſhould we ſtudy Unity and Concord, in Opinion and Judgment as much as may be, in Charity and Peace, mutual Condeſcenſions, and kind Forbearances, where the Former cannot be. As they are freed from Sin, and ſhine in uninterrupted Holineſs: So ſhould we conſider ourſelves, as Perſons no longer under the Power of a carnal Principle, but animated by the ſame Spirit, to a rational and divine Life; a Life of Temperance and Chaſtity, of ſevere Virtue and exemplary Piety; of Activity and unwearied Induſtry in doing Good; and of ſuch habitual Mortification of thoſe Affections which move us to Evil, that, as with the Bleſſed above they are not; ſo they ſhall now be with us, as though they were not any more. Theſe are ſome of the Manners and Cuſtoms of that glorious City above, neceſſary to be received and obſerved by us, as Members of that beſt and moſt beneficial Society. And thus only can we, in the Vulgar and Moral Senſe of the Word, make proof, thus only in the Political and

Metaphorical Senſe of the Word reap the Profit, of *our Converſation being in Heaven.*

It is true, we carry ſomething about with us, which will give great Interruption to the beſt Men, in their Endeavours thus to ſpiritualize their Converſation; ſomething, for which a prepoſterous Fondneſs hinders moſt Men, from endeavouring it at all. Were we, like thoſe Bleſſed we are called upon to imitate, diſburdened of this Load of Fleſh; ſuch a Converſation were eaſy. But, as it is, to have our Neceſſities in one Place, and our Thoughts in another; ſome think a Command, neither reaſonable, nor practicable. I have, in the Courſe of this Work, had Occaſion, more than once, to detect the Fallacy of this Objection; by ſhewing, that all the needful Cares of the preſent Life are very conſiſtent with all that Purſuit of one to come, which the Chriſtian Religion requires. But that, which is moſt proper to be obſerved on this Occaſion, is the Apoſtle's chooſing to make that very *Body*, which ſerves for a Pretence to *mind earthly Things*, an Argument for *our Converſation being in Heaven.* For ſo he does in both Senſes of that Word, by that following Clauſe, *from whence alſo we look for the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Who ſhall change our vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all Things unto himſelf.* Ver. 20, 21.

If the Body were to ſubſiſt in this State only; there might be ſome Excuſe for taking ſuch Courſes, as tend to the gratifying an eſſential Part of our Nature, and making the moſt of its ſhort Continuance upon Earth. But in regard This alſo is a Citizen of Heaven; Reaſon good, that This alſo ſhould ſubmit to the Laws of that Place, where it is to expect the Completion of its Happineſs. We are indeed acquainted, that *Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption.* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

And therefore St. *Paul* takes care to inſtruct us, what Methods

Methods will be uſed, to qualify it for ſo bleſſed an Inheritance. He calls it, with regard to its preſent Condition, our *vile Body*; and repreſents it as in a State of Humiliation and Diſhonour upon Account of the Frailties and Neceſſities, the Afflictions and Sorrows, the Sickneſſes and Pains, the Decay and Death, to which it is now liable. But all theſe he declares ſhall be effectually removed; and ſuch a Change wrought upon it, as, though it ſurpaſs our Comprehenſion, ought not to exceed our Belief. For the Perſon effecting it is of Power uncontroulable; and, that he not only can but will effect it, we have all the reaſon in the World to aſſure ourſelves; from that Inſtance and Exemplification of this Power, already exhibited in his own Human Body. There is not any natural Infirmity we now labour under, with which the Son of God, when condeſcending to take our Nature upon him, did not burden himſelf. And as the Sufferings he then ſubmitted to, are placed to the Account of Human Nature in general; ſo is the Exaltation and Immortality of his Body now in Heaven, a Proof and Pledge of Bliſs and Incorruption, which ſhall commence at the Reſurrection of the Bodies of the Faithful in general. This is the Importance of our Apoſtle's Argument; and a very proper and forcible one it is, for the Purpoſes intended to be promoted by it.

For the Conſequences of this Doctrine thoroughly aſſented to, are evidently ſuch as follow.

1. That nothing can be more fooliſh and abſurd, than by Idleneſs and Effeminacy, Luxury and Lewdneſs, to make (as the Apoſtle emphatically expreſſes it) *our Belly our God*. Becauſe this is ſo far from contributing to the Happineſs of the Body, that it only gratifies thoſe Appetites and Corruptions, and adds to thoſe Dregs and Droſs, from whence even this material and groſs Part of us muſt be refined and purified, in order

order to a Poſſibility of being happy. It only makes more Work for our great Change, by immerſing us deeper in Fleſh and Senſe. Whereas the Man, who conſiders thoſe Deſires, as Marks of his preſent Vileneſs, and the total Abolition of them as the Glory and Perfection of his Nature; does by reſiſting and ſubduing theſe, in ſome Degree anticipate his great Change, and take off from the moſt reproachful Part of his preſent Humiliation, by *poſſeſſing his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour.* 1 Theſſ. iv. 4.

2. As the Belief and Conſideration of this mighty Change would be of good Service to us, againſt that Part of our preſent Corruption, which we may prevent; ſo would they prove an excellent Support againſt that Part, which we cannot prevent. Wants and Afflictions, Diſeaſes and Languiſhings, Sorrow and Decay, are Incumbrances upon Mortality; from which the brighteſt Virtue, and moſt heavenly Diſpoſitions are not exempted. But the Good, even when they ſuffer them, can find abundant Reaſon for not being dejected under them. Becauſe they can ſee to the End of all theſe Hardſhips, and fortify themſelves with the Proſpect of that impaſſible State, which ſhall ſhortly ſet them quite out of the Reach of thoſe Griefs, that may wear and waſte, but cannot deſtroy, the Body they fall upon. They know the Time cannot be long of being toſſed on the Billows of this tempeſtuous Sea; for the Country, to which they are making, is in view. A Country ſo delightful, that, when they are put ſafe on Shore, the Waves and Storms they have gone through, ſhall either be forgotten, or remembred with Pleaſure. And the Knowledge of this happy Revolution in their Fortunes is no leſs an Antidote againſt, than the actual Enjoyment ſhall be a Recompence for, their preſent Sufferings. For we wonderfully miſtake the Matter, if we ſuppoſe the ſame Calamities to be equally grievous to all Men. The Senſe of theſe is

unqueſtionably more or leſs afflicting, as they find a Man's Mind more or leſs armed to encounter them. And every Impreſſion is proportionably tender, as it wounds us in the Part moſt ſenſible; and threatens the Deſtruction of that, wherein we eſteem our Happineſs to conſiſt. From hence it follows unavoidably, that to *mind earthly Things*, in St. *Paul*'s Meaning, is to multiply Sorrow to our ſelves, by giving Afflictions a Power of making us miſerable. But, that to have *our Converſation in Heaven* goes a great Way toward diſarming them; and conſults our preſent Eaſe, as well as our future Happineſs. For, while we look upon Heaven as our Home and Place of Reſt; the Inconveniencies upon our Journey are eaſily taken up with: and we learn to be content in our Travels, with the Want of thoſe Accommodations, of which there is ſure and vaſt Plenty, to welcome our Arrival at our fixed Habitation.

3. Once more: This Change ſhould be ſeriouſly attended to, becauſe it is the beſt Mitigation of the Concern, ſo apt to overwhelm us, upon the Account either of our own Death, or of theirs who are very dear to us. The Alteration made by ſad Diſaſters when that Death is violent, or by pining Sickneſs when it is leiſurely and lingering, do not reduce the Body at its loweſt and worſt Eſtate, in any compariſon ſo far beneath its gayeſt Bloom and Vigour; as the moſt perfect Beauty upon Earth comes ſhort of the meaneſt of thoſe *Stars*, *which yet differ from each other in Glory*. And therefore we ought to be content with what even the Dead are now, in Conſideration of what they one Day ſhall be. Which though we do not yet know diſtinctly and in every reſpect; yet we do or may know, that it ſhall be as far above the preſent, as *Incorruption* is above *Corruption*, *Glory* above *Diſhonour*, *Power* above *Weakneſs*, and the *Image of the Heavenly*

1 Cor. xv. 41.

Ver. 42, 43, 44. — 49.

leavenly above that of the Earthly Adam. This juſtifies our ſolemn *Thanks* to God, for *delivering* our Brethren *out of the Miſeries of this ſinful World:* becauſe of that *Joy* and *Felicity*, which their *Souls* enter upon, as ſoon as *delivered from the Burden of the Fleſh*; and that *perfect Conſummation of Bliſs and Glory*, which awaits *Body and Soul both*, when God ſhall have *accompliſhed the Number of his Elect.* This, *Laſtly*, proves the Decency and Significance of that pious Care and Reſpect to theſe Bodies, which ſo early, and ſo remarkably, diſtinguiſhed Chriſtians from the reſt of the World: Who laid them up in the Earth Whole, to teſtify their Opinion, that they were not ſwallowed up by the Grave as a Prey, but depoſited there as a Truſt. A Truſt, which will ſurely be demanded back again, and whereof a punctual Reſtitution is expected. For ſo our admirable Liturgy hath taught us, in the Office of Interment, to *commit* theſe Bodies *to the Ground, in ſure and certain Hope of the Reſurrection to Eternal Life, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* Who (as this Portion of Scripture hath aſſured us) ſhall change our vile Body, this *Earth*, and *Aſhes*, and *Duſt*, *that it may be like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty Working, whereby he is able to ſubdue all Things to himſelf.* To whom therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Praiſe and Thankſgiving henceforth for evermore.

Burial Service, 1ſt Collect.

The Three and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. xxii. 15.

15. *THEN went the Phariſees, and took Counſel how they might entangle him in his Talk.*

16. *And they ſent out unto him their Diſciples, with the Herodians, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the Way of God in Truth, neither careſt thou for any Man: for thou regardeſt not the Perſon of Men.*

17. *Tell us therefore, what thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give Tribute unto Cæſar, or not?*

18. *But Jeſus perceived their Wickedneſs, and ſaid, Why tempt ye me, ye Hypocrites?*

19. *Shew me the Tribute Money. And they brought unto him a Penny.*

20. *And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe is this Image and Superſcription?*

21. *They ſay unto him, Cæſar's. Then ſaith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæſar, the Things which are Cæſar's; and unto God, the Things that are God's.*

22. *When they had heard theſe Words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their Way.*

COMMENT.

THE Goſpel for this Day is appointed upon Two other Occaſions in the Yearly Service of our Church: Both of them ſolemn Feſtivals, for commemorating ſignal Mercies, vouchſafed us in our Politick and National Capacity. Both conſequently ſuch, as a Diſcourſe concerning the Rights of Civil Governors muſt needs be more eſpecially ſeaſonable upon: As well then upon that Account, as leſt this Volume ſhould ſwell too far beyond its juſt Proportion; I intreat my Reader's Patience, to expect what I conceive proper to be obſerved from hence, in the Offices for the *Twenty-ninth* of *May* and the *Eighth* Day of *March*. The former juſtly celebrated with Thankſgiving, for an End put to the Great and moſt deteſtable *Rebellion*, by the Reſtoration of the King and Royal Family, and the Government eſtabliſhed in Church and State:

The

The latter, for the Continuance of these Blessings to us, by the happy Accession of her most Excellent Majesty Queen *Anne* to the Throne of these Kingdoms, in which God grant her long and gloriously to sit.

The Four and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech thee, absolve thy People from their Offences; that thro' thy bountiful Goodness, we may all be delivered from the Bands of those Sins, which by our Frailty we have committed. Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's Sake, our Blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Col. i. 3.

PARAPHRASE.

3. *WE give Thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.*

4. *Since we heard of your Faith in Christ Jesus, and of the Love which ye have to all Saints;*

4. From the Time that we were informed of your embracing the Christian Faith, and of that Charity to all your Fellow-Christians, which is a natural Fruit and an Evidence of your Sincerity in that Faith.

5. *For the Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Words of the Truth of the Gospel:*

6. *Which is come unto you, as it is in all the World, and bringeth forth Fruit, as it doth also in you, since the Day ye heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in Truth.*

6. This Gospel, in all the Places where it is wonderfully spread, produces the like Effects of Love and Hope, in as many as have received it in Purity and Truth.

7. *As ye learned also of Epaphras, our dear fellow Servant, who is for you a faithful Minister of Christ;*

7. As ye have done by the Ministry of *Epaphras*, by whose Instructions ye were converted, and who hath faithfully discharged his Duty in the Doctrine he taught.

8. He it is, that gave me an Account of that Chriſtian Charity, for which, by the Grace of God inclining your Hearts, ye are become ſo conſpicuous.

8. *Who alſo declared unto us your Love in the Spirit.*

9, 10. See *Phil.* i. 9. See Comment on Epiſt. for 22 Sund. and Epiſt. for Sunday.

9. *For this Cauſe we alſo, ſince the Day we heard it, do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire that ye might be filled with the Knowledge of his Will, in all Wiſdom, and ſpiritual Underſtanding.*

10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good Work, and increaſing in the Knowledge of God;*

11. That by the Power of his aſſiſting Grace ye may be enabled to perſevere in your Duty, with Patience and Meekneſs and Conſtancy under any Afflictions, which ye ſhall be called to ſuffer upon that Account;

11. *Strengthened with all Might according to his glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-ſuffering with Joyfulneſs;*

12. Being thankful to God, not only for that glorious Inheritance, to which he hath given you a Title by adopting you his Sons; but alſo for that Grace and Holineſs, which are equally his Gift, whereby we are qualified to receive our Portion in that heavenly Land of Promiſe. *See Epiſt. after* Trin. viii. *and* xii.

12. *Giving Thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

COMMENT.

THE Reader will eaſily diſcern by this Paraphraſe, that the moſt material Paſſages in the Scripture now at hand, have been already conſidered. And, being directed by the References upon it, where to refreſh his Memory concerning them, he may ſoon convince himſelf, how little Occaſion there is for detaining him with any farther Enlargement at this Time.

The Four and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. ix. 18.

18. *WHILE Jesus spake these Things unto John's Disciples, Behold there came a* * *certain Ruler and worshipped him, saying, My Daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy Hand upon her, and she shall live.*

PARAPHRASE.

18. * A Ruler of the Synagogue, whose name was *Jairus*, addressed to him in most reverent and humble Manner; telling him, that he had one only Daughter, whom he left at the Point of Death, and feared at this Time she might be dead, (compare *Mark* v. 22, 23. *Luke* viii. 41, 42.) But though Matters were brought to that desperate Pass, yet he doubted not, but if Jesus would come and lay his Hands on her, he had Power to recover her, or even to restore her to Life.

19. *And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his Disciples.*

19. To this Request our Lord condescended, and as he was going with his Disciples and great Throng of People,

(20. *And behold, a Woman which was diseased with an Issue of Blood twelve Years, came behind him, and touched the Hem of his Garment.*

21. *For she said within herself, If I may but touch his Garment, I shall be whole.*

20, 21. A Woman in the Crowd, who had for twelve Years laboured under a great Weakness of Nature (and had spent all her Substance upon Physicians to no Manner of Effect, for her Disease rather grew upon her, *Mark* v. 24—26. *Luke* viii. 42, 43.) This Woman, hearing of Jesus, and sensible that her Distemper was a Legal Uncleanness, came by stealth behind him and touched that Fringe of his Garment, which God had commanded the Jews to wear for a Distinction. (See *Numb.* xv. 38, 39. *Deut.* xxii. 12.) being fully persuaded, that the Touch of any Thing about him was sufficient to heal her, (*Mark* v. 28, 29.) and so it proved immediately.

22. *But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good Comfort, thy Faith hath made thee whole. And the Woman was made whole from that Hour.*

22. Jesus thereupon, knowing Virtue to be gone out of him (*Mark* v. 30.) enquired who touched him. Which his Disciples thought a strange Question in the midst of so great a Croud: But he still looked about for this Person, who, finding that what she had done could not be concealed, and feeling the powerful Effect of it, came in great Fear, and related both the Fact and the Success of it. Whereupon Jesus encouraged her, and at once owned and confirmed her Cure.

23. During the Delay, occaſioned by this Miracle, a Meſſage came from the Ruler's

23. *And when Jeſus came into the Ruler's Houſe, and ſaw the Minſtrels, and the People making a Noiſe,*

Houſe, that his Daughter was now actually dead, and therefore it was to no Purpoſe to give Jeſus the Trouble of coming. All which notwithſtanding, Jeſus bade the Ruler fear nothing, but ſtill to retain the ſame vigorous Faith, he came to him with at firſt (*Mark* v. 35, 36. *Luke* viii. 49, 50.) When he came to the Houſe, he ſuffered none to ſtay with him, where the Body lay, but *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, and the Parents of the Child. And then it appeared plainly that ſhe was dead, by the ſolemn Lamentations, and the Pomp of Mourners uſual upon ſuch Occaſions.

24. To whom Jeſus ſaid, that there was no Need of theſe funeral Ceremonies; for the

24. *He ſaid unto them, Give place, for the Maid is not dead, but ſleepeth. And they laughed him to Scorn.*

Perſon now dead, ſhould not (as they ſuppoſed ſhe would) continue ſo; but be awakened to Life preſently, as one out of Sleep. Which they, who knew her to be dead, thought a very ridiculous Saying, and flouted at Jeſus accordingly, *Mark* v. 38—40. *Luke* viii. 52, 53.

25. But Jeſus (as was ſaid) admitting none to be preſent, except thoſe few Witneſſes mention-

25. *But when the People were put forth, he went in, and took her by the Hand, and the Maid aroſe.*

ed before, went in to the Body, and taking the Child by the Hand, commanded her to ariſe; which ſhe immediately did, and the Soul being thus returned to its Body (*Luke* viii. 55.) he ordered Meat to be given her; and charged the Parents not to divulge this Miracle. (*Mark* v. 23. *Luke* viii. 56.)

26. But, notwithſtanding that Injunction of Secrecy, it was

26. *And the Fame hereof went abroad into all that Land.*

quickly noiſed abroad, and gained him great Reputation in all that Country.

COMMENT.

THE Goſpel for this Day conſiſts of Two Miracles. The One (if I may be allowed ſo to diſtinguiſh) principally deſigned; the Other, as it were, incidental only. In the former we have a tender Father, applying in Behalf of one only Daughter, lying at the laſt Gaſp. Yet ſo, that he ſeems to have judged it poſſible for our Lord to have arrived at the Patient, Time enough to prevent her Death; had he not permitted himſelf to be

detained by the Cure of the Bloody Iſſue, and the Expoſtulations that followed thereupon; as he manifeſtly, and in Truth moſt wiſely, did. For, though every Moment was precious, and the leaſt Delay ſeemingly cruel, to a ſorrowful and impatient Father; yet was even this Delay for his Improvement and Benefit. So ſudden a Recovery of an inveterate Diſtemper, the Obſtinacy whereof had baffled all the Skill and Medicines of Man, gave a Demonſtration of our Saviour's Power, ſo full of Wonder; that the Sight and Experience of it might reaſonably confirm this Ruler in a Belief, that nothing could be too difficult for the Perſon who had effected it. So provident is God in all his Diſpenſations: So gracious, even in withholding his Mercies and Supplies for a Seaſon, that the very Delays we ſuffer in temporal Affairs, are for our Advantage. They do not only contribute to our Improvement in another Kind, but oftentimes make Way for a more ſurpriſing and bountiful Grant in the ſame Kind. And, provided we make the right Uſe of them, wait God's good Leiſure with Patience, conſider his Methods with Prudence, and truſt in his Power and Goodneſs with Perſeverance; theſe will not fail, in the End, to render us both happier and better Men.

Goſp. 16 *Sund. after* Trin.

This is an Argument, which I have lately had Occaſion to conſider, upon our Lord's reſtoring to Life the Widow's Son of *Nain*. And, after having ſhewn, how agreeable ſuch a Method of proceeding is to the End of Afflictions in general; and how unreaſonable a Vindication of God's Honour, when manifeſting our entire Dependence upon him, by ſuffering our Affairs to be driven to Extremities, paſt all the Power of human Remedies and Helps: I then reſerved another Conſideration, equally applicable that Caſe and this before us: To which I now proceed.

Now the Point I mean, is the exceeding Goodneſs of Almighty God, in delivering his Servants from their Sufferings

Sufferings and Fears, when reduced to the moſt deplorable, and in all outward Appearance, deſperate Circumſtances. While that Widow's Son, and this Ruler's Daughter, were yet alive; though under the moſt dangerous Symptoms there was ſtill room for Hope and Comfort. Becauſe we know very well that God (as one of our Offices expreſſes it) can *even yet raiſe* Men up, *and grant them a longer Continuance among us, when the Time of their Diſſolution in all Appearance draweth nigh.* But when that Time was actually come, and all natural Poſſibilities were taken away; out Lord did not even then think it abſurd, to allay an Affectionate Father's Grief, by telling him, that his Child ſhould be reſtored to him again. This was what he alone could promiſe; What upon his Authority alone could reaſonably be expected; and that, which all, but this believing Parent, thought it moſt extravagant and ridiculous to entertain the leaſt Thought or Wiſh of, was yet effectually done for him.

Viſit. of Sick.

Nor were ſuch Events peculiar to theſe Occaſions; but the like are vouchſafed to many good People, in the Day of their Diſtreſs. We are not now indeed to look, that God will bring back to us from the Dead our Friends and Relations, when we have parted with them. Thoſe were Inſtances of Almighty Power, which had ſet Seaſons proper for exerting it. They do not belong to all Generations equally; but were confined to an Age of Miracles, long ago expired. God hath given us no Ground to truſt now to any, but ordinary Means of Relief. But yet, when human and ordinary Means are ſo ranged and brought together, ſo directed and ſurpriſingly over-ruled; that no Man could reaſonably have imagined, ſuch Cauſes ſhould ever have met, ſuch favourable Occaſions ſhould ever have been offered, ſuch happy Uſes ſhould ever have been made, ſuch vaſt Advantages ſhould ever have been drawn out of them: If this be not a Miracle, it

is ſomething approaching very near to it. So much it is, as forces us to break out into the Pſalmiſt's Acknowledgment, *This is the Lord's doing, and* deſervedly *marvellous in our Eyes.* Pſal. cxviii. 23. *When he lifts the Simple out of the Duſt, and the Poor out of the Mire*; and ſets him upon a Level with Nobles, *even with the Princes of his People*; *when our Father and Mother forſake us*, either becauſe they are unnatural and will not, or unfortunate and cannot, ſuſtain us, and the *Lord taketh us up*; when a ſpightful Enemy, paſt our Power to reſiſt, ſeeks Terms of Accommodation, and becomes our beſt Friend and Benefactor; when a Man's Diſaſters or Extravagancies have reduced him to Poverty and Miſery, and his Wants prove a Whet to his Induſtry, and an Occaſion of promoting him higher than ever: When Friends are raiſed up to us, whom we never knew, and Advances made in our Fortunes by Thoſe, from whom we had no Manner of Expectation: When God defeats our moſt probable Hopes of Succeſs; diſappoints our Deſires and Endeavours; but makes thoſe Diſappointments inſtrumental to the ſame, or much greater, Happineſs: Is not this to bring Light out of Darkneſs, and Life out of Death? And yet theſe are Effects of Providence, frequently to be found in the World. They are ſuch, as, when Matters come to be cloſely conſidered, and Events traced up to their Spring and firſt Head, ſcarce any Man can want Experience of, either in his own Affairs, or ſome of his Acquaintance. For I am very apt to believe, that there are but few in Compariſon, whoſe Fortunes have paſs'd thro' any conſiderable Change; but the Thing, which miniſtered the firſt Occaſion and made the firſt Step toward it, will, upon Examination, appear to have been, ſomewhat ſo ſmall and trivial in itſelf, that no ſuch Effects could rationally have been propoſed from it; or ſomewhat ſo odd and unexpected, that — cxiii. 6, 7. — xxvii. 12.

that no human Prudence could have projected or foreſeen it.

Since then the Beginnings of our moſt remarkable and important Events are oftentimes ſo ſmall, and yet their Conſequences ſo full of Wonder: This Conſideration ought to inſpire us with Confidence in God, and a Holy Hope in his merciful Providence. A Truſt, not to be overthrown by even the moſt diſtreſs'd, the moſt deplorable Condition, that can poſſibly overtake us. He who convey'd unſeen Supplies into a ſmall Cruiſe of Oil, for the Suſtenance of a poor Hoſpitable Widow; He, who changed the Nature of Ravens, upon an extraordinary Emergence, and made thoſe Creatures, who barbarouſly neglect their own Young, bring conſtant Refreſhments of Bread and Fleſh to his Prophet; can never want Arts, to Us unknown, for relieving the Miſeries, and miniſtering to the Neceſſities of his Children. The moſt effectual Obſtruction to any Comforts of this Kind is a Diſtruſt of his Power and Goodneſs. An eminent Inſtance whereof the Scripture hath given us, in the unbelieving Lord of *Samaria*. Who, queſtioning whether God was able to convert an extreme Famine into a Plenty ſo ſudden as *Eliſha* had foretold, was the only Perſon not ſuffered to taſte, and to rejoice in, the Accompliſhment of that amazing Prophecy.

1 Kings xvii.

2 Kings vii.

But We, who have learned Chriſt, ought to have quite other Notions of the Divine Providence. We are allowed, nay commanded, to aſſure ourſelves, that pious Men ſhall want no manner of Thing that is good. That, if Deliverance and Proſperity be really good for them, God doth not want Bowels and Inclination to give it. And that give it, under any Circumſtances whatſoever, he can, if he ſees fit; *For we know whom we have believed*, even *Him, who is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can aſk or think.*

Pſal. lxxxiv. 11.

Eph. iii. 20.

I have

I have now done with the particular Circumſtances of this Miracle, and the Inferences proper to be collected from the Hiſtorical Part of it. But there is under That, a Spiritual and Myſtical Meaning couched, which, methinks, calls for a little of our Attention. For the Ruler's dead Daughter here is the very Image of what we all once were, and of what too many ſtill continue to be. Perſons *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*; forſaken of a Life, which if not reſtored in Time, better were it for ſuch, never to have been born or lived at all. And this too is a Life, that cannot be recovered by any Operation leſs powerful, than that of the Almighty Son of God. Only herein we muſt obſerve ſome Difference. For in regaining that Spiritual Life, the Patient is not ſo abſolutely paſſive, as this young Maiden was. Something muſt be done on Man's Part toward it, and without ſuch Endeavours nothing will be done to any good Purpoſe. This happy Change is made in the Sanctifications of Baptiſm, upon as many as are *born* anew *of Water and of the Spirit*. The Care of our Relations, and the Charity of the Church, do, in Compaſſion to Infants of Chriſtian Parents, ſupply the Place, and perform the kind Offices, of the Father here before us. The one, by praying for and bringing, the other, by admitting ſuch to the Benefits of *that Fountain, opened for Sin and for Uncleanneſs*. Thus are the Stains of our original Corruption waſh'd away. But when we come again to be involved in Guilt through our own actual Tranſgreſſions; then ſad Remorſe, godly Contrition, hearty Repentance, and earneſt Supplications for Mercy and Pardon, are our Duty. In theſe we ſhall find the Bleſſed *Jeſus* ready (as *Jairus* did) to hear and help. And powerful Aſſiſtances of his Grace will ſuccour and reſcue us in our Extremity; provided we ſeek it importunately, and uſe it diligently. When thus prepared

Eph. ii. 1.

John iii. 5.

Zech. xiii. 1.

pared for that reviving Word, *I ſay unto thee, Ariſe*; we are to rouze ourſelves without Delay, to ſhake off all our old Corruptions, to teſtify our Return to Life by *walking* with this Damſel: that is, by *proceeding daily in all Virtue and Godlineſs of living*, and taking effectual Care, that our Actions for the future be of a new and better Kind. Then will our Spiritual Father and Mother, God and the Church, receive us with Joy, and miniſter moſt wholeſome Suſtenance to this new Life; even that *Fleſh which is Meat indeed, and that Blood which is Drink indeed.* This, we are to be very confident, our Bleſſed Saviour will not refuſe to do, even for the blackeſt and moſt miſerable Offenders, if they ſincerely turn to Him. In regard he both died and roſe again for this Intent, that he might raiſe us from the Death of Sin unto a Life of Righteouſneſs in this World, and to a Life of Bliſs and Glory everlaſting in the World to come. A Reſurrection, of which the Miracle, in this Day's Goſpel, is in ſome Sort both a Figure and a Pledge. And therefore, at the ſame Time that our Church brings the one to our Remembrance, ſhe very fitly makes the other the Matter of our ſpecial Petition. *Beſeeching* God, in her Collect, *to abſolve his People from their Offences; that through his bountiful Goodneſs we may all be delivered from the Bands of thoſe Sins, which by our Frailty we have committed.* And do thou *grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jeſus Chriſt's Sake, our bleſſed Lord and Saviour.* Amen.

Mark v. 42.

Ver. 43.

John vi. 55.

The Five and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The COLLECT.

STIR up, we beſeech thee, O Lord, the Wills of thy faithful People, that they plenteouſly bringing forth the Fruit of good Works, may of thee be plenteouſly rewarded, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Jer. xxiii. 5.

5. *BEhold the Days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will raiſe unto David a righteous Branch, and a King ſhall reign and proſper, and ſhall execute Judgment and Juſtice in the Earth.*

6. *In his Days Judah ſhall be ſaved, and Iſrael ſhall dwell ſafely: and this is his Name whereby he ſhall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

PARAPHRASE.

5, 6. The Paſtors I have promiſed to ſend (*Ver.* 2—4.) ſhall be then moſt eminently Feeders of the Flock, when the great Shepherd of the Sheep ſhall guide them. For ſuch a one, called the Branch, I will certainly raiſe up of the Stock of *David* (low as now it is) who is therefore called the Branch. He ſhall govern wiſely, and be ſucceſsful over his Enemies; and enact juſt Laws; and bring Safety to his People; and be the Author of Righteouſneſs to them, God and Man in the ſame Perſon.

Chap. xxxiii. 15.
Iſai. xi. 1.
Zech. iii. 8.
—— vi. 12.

7. *Therefore behold, the Days come, ſaith the Lord, that they ſhall no more ſay, The Lord liveth, which brought up the Children of Iſrael out of the Land of Egypt:*

7. The Bleſſings of the Deliverance wrought by him ſhall far exceed that of the *Iſraelites* from the Slavery and Miſery of *Egypt*.

8. *But the Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the Seed of the Houſe of Iſrael out of the North Country, and from all Countries whither I had driven them, and they ſhall dwell in their own Land.*

8. So that, whereas my Title of Diſtinction hitherto in Uſe, hath been that of *the Lord which brought Iſrael out of Egypt*; the Memory of that, ſhall be obſcured by this infinitely greater and more valuable Mercy; that I ſhall then be diſtinguiſhed in all ſolemn Invocations, by the Title of the Lord, who gathered all the diſperſed Jews, and ſettled them in the Poſſeſſion of all the Happineſs, promiſed to attend the glorious Reign of the *Meſſiah*.

COMMENT.

THAT this Scripture is a Prophecy of the Coming of Chriſt, and the glorious State of God's Church conſequent thereupon, hath been univerſally agreed by Chriſtian, and allowed by ſeveral of the moſt eminent *Jewiſh*, Interpreters. Nor indeed is it, I conceive, poſſible to think of any other Perſon, or Event, to which the Characters left us here agree: while at the ſame Time they do all conſpire moſt evidently to point out the Meſſiah, and his Kingdom. To make this appear, it ſhall be my Buſineſs to conſider, *Firſt*, The Prophet's Account of the Perſon promiſed here: And, *Secondly*, The Bleſſings, and beneficial Effects of his Coming.

I. Under the former of theſe Heads, we find the Perſon who is the Subject Matter of the Promiſe, mentioned in three Capacities. As a *Branch of David*, As a *King*, And as *the Lord our Righteouſneſs*.

1. No Figure is more uſual, than for the Head of a Family and the Deſcendants from him, to be repreſented by the Root or Body of a Tree and the Branches growing out of that Tree. And therefore, God having frequently declared, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be born of the Houſe and Lineage of *David*; this Prophet here, and at the *thirty-third* Chapter, (with Alluſion to a Tree waſted, and almoſt paſt bearing, and ſo reſembling the many Calamities, whereby the Poſterity of that Prince had been reduced to ſuch miſerable Circumſtances, has left no human Appearance or Hope of any future flouriſhing) mentions, as an Act of wonderful Power and Mercy, that God would ſtill *raiſe*, or *cauſe to grow up unto David a righteous Branch*. And *Iſaiah*, in like Manner, and in Terms the moſt emphatical that can be, *There ſhall come forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jeſſe, and a Branch ſhall grow out of his Roots*. The Word, tranſlated *Stem*, does

Chap. xxxiii. 15.

Chap. xi. 1.

does ſtrictly ſignify the Stump left in the Earth, when the Body of the Tree is cut away even with the Ground. And the coming of Chriſt is hereby very elegantly deſcribed, to be a Mercy as full of Surprize, as the ſhooting out of ſuch a neglected, and, in common Eſteem, dead Trunk, up to a Tree, more Verdant and Fruitful than ever.

And what could ſet before us a more lively Image of the Time and Circumſtances, in which every Particular of theſe Predictions received a moſt punctual Accompliſhment, by the Birth and Coming of Chriſt? That he was very Man, of the Subſtance of his Virgin Mother, and literally the Son of *David*, is ſo expreſsly affirmed, ſo clearly made out in Scripture, and hath been already ſo fully explained; that I cannot ſuppoſe myſelf under any Neceſſity at preſent to enlarge, either upon the Truth of his human Nature, or the Account of his particular Family and Deſcent. *Goſp. S. after* Chriſtm.

That which I rather chooſe to obſerve, is, that the Glory of this Family had been declining, ever ſince the Death of his Son *Solomon*, whom God was pleaſed to make an eminent Type of Chriſt's Exaltation, as *David* himſelf had been, of his Humiliation and Sufferings. The Revolt of Ten Tribes from *Rehoboam* was a never yet repaired diſmembering of this Tree; the frequent Provocations of very wicked Succeſſors in that Line had drawn on many Judgments and Publick Calamities, which ſtill took more away from it. The *Babyloniſh* Captivity put an End to the Royal Style and Dignity. The Exerciſe of Power was indeed continued afterwards, and particularly proſperous, under the Adminiſtration of *Zerubbabel*. But it deſerves to be remarked, that neither Name, nor Thing, remained at the Time of our Saviour's Birth. For tho' *Herod* had then, by the Favour of the *Roman* Emperor, the Title of King allowed him: yet *Herod* was ſo far from being of *David*'s Lineage, as not to be

of either *Judah*'s, or any other Tribe whatſoever; but by Birth an *Idumean*, and of Deſcent foreign to the whole Race, over which he then preſided. The placing this Authority in a Stranger's Hand did not only interrupt, but intercept all human Proſpect of, Succeſſion in any Deſcendant from *David*. And hence it is, that the Hiſtory of our Bleſſed Lord's Life takes ſpecial Notice of his being born in the Days of *Herod* the King: Thereby to put the *Jews* upon comparing Events with Predictions; and, by a juſt Calculation of Times and Circumſtances, to make them ſenſible, that the Stock of *David* was then cut down to the very Root; and that, when neither Mark nor Hope of Royalty remained in any Other, the proper Seaſon was come for raiſing, from that Trunk ſo trodden down, the promiſed *Branch*; which ſhould put forth and expand itſelf more fruitfully than ever, by being in a manner and degree of Honour and Power, incomparably above any of his Anceſtors, *King of the Jews*. And this leads to the

Matt. ii. 1. Luke i. 5.

2. *Second* Capacity, wherein Chriſt is promiſed here, in thoſe Words, *A King ſhall reign*. That the *Meſſiah* was, all along down from the Time of *David*, foretold and expected under this Character, is agreed even by the bittereſt Adverſaries to the Chriſtian Religion. Indeed their main Objection againſt *Jeſus* being the *Meſſiah*, turns upon his making a Figure, ſo very different from the Pomp and Grandeur, which they conceive eſſential to that Dignity, and neceſſary to anſwer thoſe magnificent Expreſſions, in which the Prophets have deſcribed the Glories of his Kingdom. To this Argument I ſhall endeavour to give Satisfaction by and by. Mean while let it be remembered, that, from the Time pointed to by the Prediction now before us, the *Jews* ſeem to have expected no other King, but Him; and, as well for that Reaſon, as to intimate their Notions of the

Ver. 5.

the Greatneſs and Majeſty attributed to Him, they generally mention him with that Title of Eminence and Diſtinction, *Meſſiah the King*. Nor is the New Teſtament wanting in affirming our *Jeſus* to be ſuch; in a Manner far ſuperior to any other. The Angel at his Conception applies to him the Prophecies of *Iſaiah*, *Daniel*, and *Micah*, by ſaying, *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt, and the Lord God ſhall give unto Him the Throne of his Father David. And he ſhall reign over the Houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there ſhall be no End.* The Queſtion with which the wiſe Men from the Eaſt came to *Jeruſalem* upon his Nativity, was, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews?* For Reſolution whereof, the Oracles of the Law being called together to conſult, the Demand made of them is, *Where Chriſt ſhall be born.* And when they had fixed on *Bethlehem* for the Place, thoſe Enquirers were conducted thither to *Jeſus*, by the Guidance of an extraordinary Star. The firſt Confeſſion of him, made by *Nathaniel*, runs in this Form, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael:* The Acclamations of the People attending him into the Holy City, run in this Strain, *Bleſſed is the King of Iſrael that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* Theſe he was ſo far from rebuking, at the Phariſees Requeſt, as even then obſcurely to acknowledge the Juſtice and Propriety of the Appellation. But this he did afterward more openly; in Converſation with his own Diſciples, *I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me:* In his Confeſſion before *Pilate*; but moſt expreſsly, when, before his Aſcent into Heaven, he declares the univerſal Extent of this Kingdom, *All Power is*

Luke i. 32, 33. *Comp.* Iſai. ix. 7. Dan. vii. 14. Micah iv. 7.

Matt. ii. 2, 4, 5, 9, 10.

John i. 49.

John xii. 13.

Luke xix. 39.

— xxii. 29. — xxiii. 3.

John xviii. 36, 37.

Matt. xxviii. 18.

given unto me in Heaven and in Earth: As St. *Paul* does the Duration and abſolute Dominion of it, when ſaying, that *He muſt reign, till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet:* And, when calling him, with St. *John*, *The bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*

1 Cor. xv. 25.

1 Tim. vi. 15. Rev. xix. 16.

3. The laſt Thing obſervable in the Perſon foretold, is that *Name* ſaid to belong to him, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs.* Which, being in the Original *Jehovah*, a Name denoting the Eſſence and Immutability of God, and acknowledged by the *Jews* incommunicable to any Creature, intimates to us the Divinity of Chriſt. Concerning the perſonal Union whereof to the Human Nature, and the invaluable Merit of his Sufferings upon that Account, whereby he expiated the Sins of the whole World, and ſo became *our Righteouſneſs*; as the Meaſure of this Diſcourſe will not allow, ſo the Conſideration of thoſe Subjects heretofore may very well diſpenſe with my farther inſiſting upon them now.

See Epiſt. and Goſp. Chriſtmas *Day.* *Epiſt. Wedneſd. before* Eaſter.

II. I paſs therefore to my *Second* General Head: The Bleſſings and Beneficial Effects of the *Meſſiah*'s Coming, foretold here, (1.) By his *reigning* and *proſpering*. (2.) By his *executing Judgment and Juſtice in the Earth.* (3.) By the profound Safety and Quiet of *Judah* and *Iſrael* under his Government: And *Laſtly*, By theſe Bleſſings ſo far ſurpaſſing the Deliverance of that People out of *Egypt*, as in a Manner to ſwallow up all Remembrance of that leſs, in the grateful Acknowledgements of this infinitely more, valuable Mercy. Somewhat of theſe in their Order, and of each as briefly as may be.

1. The *Firſt*, which concerns the *Meſſiah's reigning* and *proſpering*, will neceſſarily oblige us to conſider that capital Objection of the *Jews*, who deny, that our *Jeſus* could poſſibly be the *Meſſiah*, becauſe he was a Man of Poverty and Affliction, lived meanly, and died ignomi-

ignominiouſly: and therefore (ſay they) is moſt abſurdly put upon the World, for that Perſon, who is foretold in the Quality of a King, the moſt glorious that ever was, or ſhall be, in the World.

In Anſwer hereunto, let me juſt mention Two Obſervations, which have been handled more fully upon another Occaſion. Boyle's *Lect.* 1701. *Serm.* VIII.

Firſt, Let it be conſidered, that the *Meſſiah*, in order to accompliſh the Prophecies concerning him, was to ſuſtain Three very different Characters. That of a Prophet, and of a Prieſt, as well as that of a King. As a Prophet, he was, not only to teach his People; but undergo the common Fate of Prophets, in being deſpiſed, contradicted, perſecuted, and bearing Teſtimony to the Truth of his Doctrine by the Example of his Sufferings for it. As a Prieſt he muſt ſacrifice for the Sins of his People; which in this Caſe could not be otherwiſe done, than by offering his own Blood, and conſequently dying in their Stead. And the Reaſons for his dying in ſo ignominious a Manner, have been formerly ſet forth. Now both theſe, in the Courſe of Things appointed by God, were to go before the Entrance upon his Kingly Office; becauſe the Prophecies mention this laſt, as a Recompence for the faithful Diſcharge of the other Two. Accordingly the ſolemn Inveſtiture in his Kingdom commenced from his Reſurrection. That proved him to *be the Son of God with Power*; and the Day of his Aſcent to the Throne of the Majeſty on High was that of his actual Inauguration. Conſequently, all Arguments, drawn from the Meanneſs of his Appearance upon Earth, are of no Force againſt his Royal Character. Becauſe that Meanneſs was exactly agreeable to the Character, proper to be ſuſtained at that Time. But, as the Prophetick was to give Way to the Prieſtly, ſo was the Sacrificer's to

Tueſday before Eaſter.

Pſal. xxii.
Iſai. liii.
Comp. Heb. i. 3. ii. 10. x. 12, 13. Phil. ii. 7—11.

Rom. i. 4.

the Kingly Office. And, to urge any Thing to Purpoſe againſt this, it is neceſſary to argue from Facts, ſubſequent to that Appearance upon Earth. For, to complain, that his Kingly Power was not exerciſed at his firſt Coming, is to miſunderſtand the Prophecies, and to confound the Order of Events; 'tis to expect a full Accompliſhment of Predictions within a very narrow Space, that ſtrictly belong to an Office, ſtill in Exerciſe, and to which, the Scripture ſays, *There ſhall be no End.*

Iſai. ix. 7.

Secondly, It ſhould be obſerved, that it is agreeable to the Cuſtom of thoſe Times and Countries in general, and to the Style and Manner of the Prophets in particular, to abound with figurative Schemes of Speech. Eſpecially, when Subjects uncommon, ſublime, and ſpiritual, are treated of, it is common to repreſent them by the moſt pompous and bold Metaphors and Deſcriptions, derived from ſuch Objects of Senſe as awaken in our Minds the moſt lofty Apprehenſions we are capable of. This the *Jews* themſelves make no Difficulty to allow; and ſome of their greateſt Doctors have made it a Rule for interpreting the Prophets, that they are not to be literally underſtood, by Reaſon of thoſe Metaphorical Expreſſions; the true Intent whereof is to repreſent Things according to our Capacity by Images familiar to our Senſes. This appears alſo to be their own Method of interpreting ſeveral Paſſages of the Old Teſtament, acknowledged by themſelves to belong to the *Meſſiah*, as Deſcriptions of his peaceful and glorious Kingdom. Particularly the lxxiid Pſalm, the xith, xxxvth, lxvth, and lxvith of *Iſaiah*, the ivth and vth of *Micah*, the two laſt Chapters of *Zechariah*, and ſundry others. And indeed we are leaſt on this Occaſion of any, to wonder at the Recourſe had to ſuch Figures and Flights. Becauſe the Benefits ſpoken of are of ſo exalted a Nature, as to make that Pomp of Expreſſion the Effect of Neceſſity which

Maim. More Nevoch. p. ii. c. xxix. xlvii. Menaſ. Ben. Iſrael. Qu. in Gen. xxx.

which would in others paſs for choſen and artificial. Others may be magnified above their juſt Proportions; but no Words can come up to the real Dignity of theſe; and therefore the moſt magnificent Deſcriptions, borrowed from ſenſible Objects, do not adorn or exalt, but only ſpeak of them in the moſt reſpectful Manner, that our poor Capacities are able to bear.

The Latter of theſe Obſervations will bear us out in applying this Paſſage of *Jeremiah* to our Bleſſed Lord and his Kingdom, in a Spiritual Senſe. For what King ever was ſo proſperous, as this, who, by the Propagation of the Goſpel, hath enlarged his Dominions ſo wonderfully, over the moſt diſtant Regions of the habitable World; what Conqueſt was ever ſo glorious as that, which he hath gained over the Errors and Prejudices, the Luſts and Paſſions, of wicked and miſtaken Men; nay even over all the Powers of Darkneſs, and Sin, and Death, and Hell? Who ever executed Righteouſneſs and Judgment in the Earth, like Him, who hath enacted Laws ſo holy, ſo prudent, ſo beneficial; that, if duly obſerved, the Effect of them muſt be ſuch exact Juſtice, ſuch uninterrupted Order and Peace, ſuch Gentleneſs, and Good-nature, and univerſal Charity, as would make even an Heaven upon Earth? Thus would the true *Judah*, the *Iſrael* of God, they that believe and practiſe his bleſſed Doctrine, dwell in profound Safety. For the diſtinguiſhing of whom by theſe Titles, alluding to God's once peculiar People literally ſo called, as the Scriptures have left us ſundry Examples; ſo thoſe *Jews* have no Reaſon to reproach us, who to this Day do, in the very ſame Senſe, ſtigmatize Chriſtians with the Name of *Edomites*. Thus again is the Deliverance of *Iſrael* after the Fleſh, infinitely ſurpaſſed, by the Reſcue of *Iſrael* after the Spirit, from a Tyranny and Bondage, with which the *Egyptian* deſerves not ſo much as to be named. And the Remembrance of the Former is in great Meaſure ſwallowed up

Rom. ix. 6.
Gal. vi. 16.

and

and defaced, by the Abolition of thoſe Ceremonial Rites and Feſtivals; into the Place whereof the Two Chriſtian Sacraments, and our Seaſons of publick Thankſgiving, do ſucceed; as Commemorations, and perpetual Monuments, of this latter and better Redemption. Theſe all are Mercies of ſuch a Nature, as require Images, borrowed from worldly Proſperity and Objects familiar to us, for conveying into our Minds Ideas of Benefits, remote from our Bodily Senſes. But withal Benefits of that Magnitude and vaſt Conſequence, that the Deſcriptions, taken from ſenſible and external Happineſs, even when moſt lofty and magnificent, though the beſt Helps our Condition can admit, are yet all little enough, to make us worthily conceive of them.

2. But be it granted, as indeed it ſeems very probable from ſeveral Paſſages in both Teſtaments, that this, and ſundry other Prophecies, mean temporal Greatneſs, Proſperity, and Peace; and theſe to be enjoyed by *Iſrael* and *Judah* ſtrictly ſo called, under the Government of the Meſſiah. Yet is not the continuance of their Diſperſion and Calamity any juſt Prejudice againſt believing our *Jeſus* to be the Meſſiah. Had the Adverſaries of our Religion been able to produce any Predictions not yet accompliſhed, which properly belong to his Prophetick or Prieſtly Character, and ſuch Actions as were determined to his firſt Advent; thoſe had been formidable Objections indeed. But the Force of Objections againſt his Kingly Character is by no means the ſame. Becauſe, as hath been ſaid, the End of his Humiliation, was his Acceſſion to the Throne: This Office he is ſtill in the Exerciſe of, and ſhall remain ſo to the End of the World. The Glorious Things foretold with regard to this, have each their proper Seaſon and Order, and are drawn out to a long Tract of Time: Many of theſe, we know, are ſtill behind; and ſuch, as the Father ſeems to have ſo entirely reſerved to his own Power, as to have left

left the Periods for their Accompliſhment very much in the dark. Mean while he hath abundantly ſignified, that the Diſtance of the Time from his leaving the World was very conſiderable. He hath laid down ſome memorable Events, which ſhould be Marks and Preliminaries to the Approach of the Reſt. He hath intimated ſome Reaſons for the Delay of them, pointed out the Obſtructions to them, and warned Men not to be ſhaken in their Faith, becauſe the Expectations of this Kind are not, either fully anſwered, or in human Proſpect near being ſo. They are ſtill within the Term aſſigned them by the Prophets: The Days of the *Meſſiah*, and the *Laſt* Days, being, in the Acceptation even of *Jews* themſelves, Phraſes of like Importance; and ſuch, as no End ſhall ever come to, that only excepted, when Chriſt ſhall *deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and ſhall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power.*

Rom. xi.

2 Theſſ. ii.

2 Pet. iii.

1 Cor. xv. 24.

Of the Events, reſerved for the latter End of thoſe Days, the general Converſion of the *Jews* to the Chriſtian Faith, mentioned in the *Eleventh* to the *Romans*, and the glorious State of the Church antecedent to the Laſt Judgment, have deſervedly been eſteemed ſome of the Principal. The Account whereof, as deſcribed by the ancient Prophets, and in the Revelation of St. *John*, will fill the Characters of Holineſs and Purity, Tranquility and Splendor, any where attributed to it; though the Aſſertors of it ſhould not think it neceſſary to go into many of the Notions advanced by ſome Millenaries of theſe latter Ages, which ſeem too liable to juſt Exceptions, and foreign from thoſe, which the Primitive Fathers entertained concerning it. Thus much a very learned Commentator of our Time and Nation, hath taken excellent Pains to prove, in a late Diſcourſe upon this Subject.

Dr. Whitby *on the* Millenium.

By

By what hath been obſerved upon this Head my Deſign is to ſhew, that we are not left under any reaſonable Doubt, whether our Bleſſed Lord be the promiſed *Meſſiah*, though his Kingly Authority be not ſo viſibly and powerfully exerted, as it ſhall one Day be: Nor all thoſe glorious Effects, as yet fulfilled, which are implied in ſeveral Predictions, relating to his peaceful and victorious Reign. The amazing Vengeance taken on his Murderers, in their City and Conſtitution; the no leſs wonderful Succeſs of his Goſpel, propagated and preſerved in deſpight of his and its Enemies; theſe are Inſtances of that unlimited *Power in Heaven and Earth*, wherewith this King is inveſted. The enlightening *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by bringing ſuch Multitudes of the one, and ſo many Nations of the other Sort, to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, are already a partial Completion of the Prophecies; tho' there be ſtill a nobler in reſerve, when the Fulneſs of Both ſhall come in. He reigns now actually in the Hearts of Men, and ſubdues the moſt formidable of our Enemies, by the Holineſs of his Laws, and the mighty Operations of his Grace. But that Dominion and Conqueſt will be much more abſolute, when the Time comes for every Enemy to be utterly deſtroyed. Though therefore the Whole be not, yet abundantly Enough hath been already fulfilled, to deliver us from Suſpence. And our Faith may very wiſely acquieſce in a moſt ſtedfaſt Aſſurance, that what is ſtill behind, ſhall certainly come to paſs; becauſe no Whit hath failed of any Thing hitherto, which was expedient and ſeaſonable to be done, as an Evidence of Chriſt's Regal Authority.

Matt. xxviii. 18.

Let the Scripture then at preſent before us be improved to the Purpoſe our Church appears to have intended it for; by confirming our Faith in the *Firſt*, and awakening us into effectual Preparation for the *Second*, Advent of our Lord. Both which are, by the

the yearly Revolution of our Holy Offices, about to be again preſented to our Thoughts. And let us to that End give all poſſible Diligence to be led by, and to work together with, that Grace and good Spirit of our God, which the Collect of this Day ſo opportunely implores, for the *Stirring up the Wills of his faithful People; that they, plenteouſly bringing forth the Fruit of good Works, may of him be plenteouſly rewarded through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

The Five and Twentieth SUNDAY *after* TRINITY.

The GOSPEL.

St. John vi. 5.

5. *WHEN Jeſus then lift up his Eyes, and ſaw a great Company come unto him, he ſaith unto Philip, Whence ſhall we buy Bread that theſe may eat?*

(6. *And this he ſaid to prove him; for he himſelf knew what he would do.*)

7. *Philip anſwered him, Two hundred Penny-worth of Bread is not ſufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

8. *One of his Diſciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's Brother, ſaid unto him,*

9. *There is a Lad here, which hath five Barley Loaves, and two ſmall Fiſhes: but what are they among ſo many?*

10. *And Jeſus ſaid, Make the Men ſit down. Now there was much Graſs in the Place. So the Men ſat down, in Number about five Thouſand.*

11. *And Jeſus took the Loaves, and when he had given Thanks, he diſtributed to the Diſciples, and the Diſciples to them that were ſat down; and likewiſe of the Fiſhes, as much as they would.*

12. *When they were filled, he ſaid unto his Diſciples, Gather up the Fragments that remain, that nothing be loſt.*

13. *Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve Baſkets with the Fragments of the five Barley Loaves, which remained over and above, unto them that had eaten.*

14. *Then thoſe Men when they had ſeen the Miracle that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is of a Truth that Prophet that ſhould come into the World.*

COMMENT.

THIS Scripture hath been fully treated of on the Goſpel for the Fourth *Sunday* in *Lent*. The Reaſon for repeating it here ſeems to have been the Inference, which the Multitudes drew from this Miracle, at the *Fourteenth* Verſe. This general Expectation of the *Meſſiah*, and of his Approach at that Time, was particularly intimated, by giving to Him the Title of *He that ſhould come*. So that the People when declaring upon the Sight of this Miracle, that Jeſus was *the Prophet that ſhould come into the World*; meant, that it was an unqueſtionable Evidence of his being the *Meſſiah*. This Meaning is yet more fully explained by their Intentions to make him a King, under which Character the *Meſſiah* was foretold and expected. And moſt probably, this Judgment of theirs was now again ſet before us, as a fit Preparation for the now returning Seaſon of *Advent*. As to the Reaſonableneſs of this Concluſion, and how far our Saviour's Miracles made Proof of his Meſſiah-ſhip; the Reader, if diſpoſed to meditate on that Point, will find it conſidered, on the Goſpels for the *Second* Sunday after the *Epiphany*, and the *Third* in *Advent*.

See Matt. xi. 2. *Goſp.* 3 *Sunday in* Advent.

Ver. 15.

FINIS.